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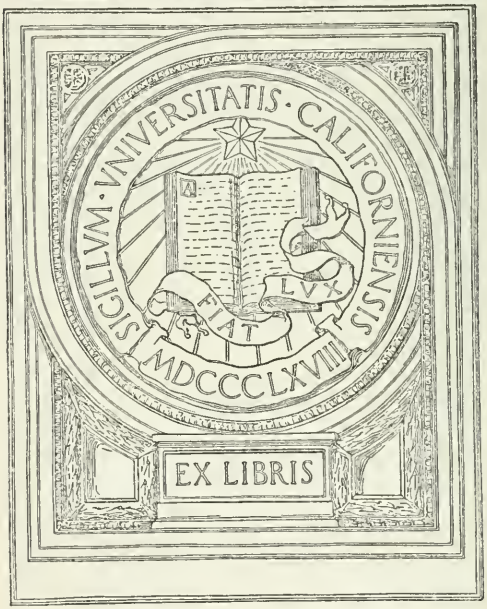

THE GIFT OF
MAY TREAT MORRISON
IN MEMORY OF
ALEXANDER F MORRISON

THE MARTYRDOM OF LABOUR

THE MARTYRDOM OF LABOUR

BY

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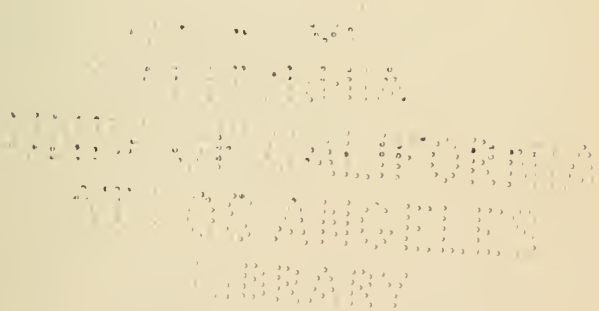

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He hath put down the mighty from their seat,
and hath exalted the humble and meek.

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PREFACE

My book will doubtless call forth opposition. That I expect and am prepared for. It would not be what it is and what it is intended to be if it did not. In the clash and coruscation of thought there is life, and in life, where it concerns the human, there is growth. That is what I desire — growth in that moral and spiritual direction which is the glory of man.

More than that in these prefatory words I do not wish to say, except that I have written my book honestly, strongly it may be, but without bitterness or hatred; not with any desire to sow discord or contention, but in the hope that it may do something to weld together in a closer amity and brotherhood that humanity for which, sharing its destiny, I have an abounding love and pity.

WANBOROUGH, SURREY.

GIFT OF MRS. A. F. MORRISON MAR 27 '43

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I PAGE

"The old order changeth" 1

CHAPTER II

"There shall be a new heaven and a new earth" . . 10

CHAPTER III

"Multitudes, Multitudes" 22

CHAPTER IV

"Behold I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people" 35

CHAPTER V

"The land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" . . 51

CHAPTER VI

"Woe to him that buildeth a house with blood, that stablish a city by iniquity" 73

CHAPTER VII

"Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents" 86

CHAPTER VIII

"I will make a man more precious than fine gold" . . 104

CHAPTER IX

"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven" 123

CHAPTER X PAGE

"*Woe unto those who lay house to house and field to field*" . 138

CHAPTER XI

"*He that ruleth over men must be just*" . . . 161

CHAPTER XII

"*My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant*" 173

CHAPTER XIII

"*My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge*" . . 188

CHAPTER XIV

"*Blessed is the man who hath his quiver full!*" . . 207

CHAPTER XV

"*The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof*" . . 222

CHAPTER XVI

"*He that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking*" . . 236

CHAPTER XVII

"*Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all*" . . 254

CHAPTER XVIII

"*Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man*" 267

CHAPTER XIX

"*Be of good cheer and let us play the man*" . . . 280

THE MARTYRDOM OF LABOUR

PROEM

"The old order changeth."

One may well say at the present time that the old order changeth giving place to new. For seldom, perhaps never in the history of the world, was it so true as it is to-day that the old order of things is passing away and a new order arising. Every hour we see, as it were, the hosts of revolution marshalling in our midst, cohort thronging upon cohort, phalanx hurrying after phalanx, drums and trumpets sounding, banners flying. On every hand we hear the reveillé sounding; everywhere we see the assembling and marching of men; everywhere we behold the units falling into line, coalescing under the inspiration of one commanding thought; everywhere we hear the measured tramp of men—everywhere deep calling unto deep—the deep heart to the deep heart of man.

Do you not hear the sound? Do you not mark the sign?

Now from this quarter and now from that comes a rumble as of distant thunder, as of the

gathering of the winds, as the roll and recoil of pent-up waters. There is hardly a moment's lull. And the welkin is darkening with clouds, the upgathering of the storm, which may mean the refreshing and the rejuvenating of nature, or which may mean simply wide-spread devastation and destruction.

Here and there, too, are gleams and flashes of lightning, and the harsh roar of the approaching tornado. Do you not hear it? Do you not gather its significance? Amid the reverberations of the thunder, distinct even amidst the throbbing of the waters, the roaring of the winds, and the clamour of awakened nature, may be heard the spirits of the tempest—the voices that are raising and directing the storm. It is the cry of the awakened multitudes.

Listen!

From the North and from the South, from the East and from the West, comes the self-same cry. It comes too with no uncertain sound; there may be here and there a jarring tone, a discordant note; but the burden of the cry is the same—everywhere the same. Nor is its meaning doubtful or obscure, leaving room for different interpretations. It is perfectly articulate and clear. The message it brings is one that all men may hear and understand. It signifies the awakening of the millions, the uprising of the

down-trodden, the resurgent clamour of the exploited.

Yes, it is in the main a clamour; but it is also more than a clamour; for, as I have said, the burden of it is everywhere the same—everywhere firm and explicit: it is the demand for justice—for equity. Nay, it is even more than that in the ultimate: it is a demand for the realisation of the Gospel of Christ—for brotherhood, the brotherhood of man.

You know what that means. It is a story that has been talked about and preached about for hundreds of years. Nay, it has even been warred about—to carry brotherhood at the point of the sword. To you it has been prattled about since your childhood. You have drunk it in as you drank in the fairy tales of your infancy and youth. It has sounded to you very beautiful; it has sometimes moved you to tears; but it has left only the faintest of impressions upon the generality of mankind. If it had been otherwise it would have produced more effect in these well-nigh nineteen hundred years: for remember we are on the threshold of the twentieth century — the twentieth century of that lullaby of Bethlehem, and as yet it only mocks us with its sweetness.

Is it a falsehood, this cradle-song of a new birth, that has been echoed down the ages?

Is it a falsehood, or is it a truth? It is for you to say—you, whoever you be, who hear the mutterings of the storm, who watch the stir and movement of the elements that form the basis of Society, and stand aloof, cold and defiant. On you depends the result—the refreshing and rejuvenating storm, or the destructive hurricane. The spirits in revolt are willing to test the question on either issue—justice, brotherhood, or the old might for right doctrine. It is for you to say which it shall be.

Do you doubt the seriousness of the contestants? Doubt if you will, but be on your guard. Prepare! The old order changeth: the constituents of society as it has heretofore existed have become molten—are daily becoming more and more fluid—ready to flow into and take any shape. Who shall say into what mould they may flow—what form they may not ultimately take? The eye of statesman or philosopher cannot see it, the plummet of poet or prophet cannot fathom it. Of this, however, we may be sure—that the forces and constituents of society, as it at present exists, will never again crystallise into their old form, but into some newer shape that is destined to take its place.

What that shape may be depends on the wisdom of those who now form part of the fluid and upheaving mass.

A hundred years ago occurred the French Revolution. It was ushered in with manifest sign and portent. But those to whom it signified the most—those who were destined, as it proved, to go down before the storm—were utterly oblivious of the warnings given to them, or, if not oblivious, scornful; laughed at them, scoffed at them, kept up the mad whirl of pleasure in the midst of the portents of storm, danced their insane Dance Macabre—yea, even in the midst of the starving multitude, danced it. They thought their reign was assured to them for ever.

To-day we see the same thing; the millions toil and starve that the few may dance and rejoice, quaffing the goblet of pleasure, saying to themselves, "This is our world; the Almighty has chosen us to enjoy the riches and the good things of the earth, and has ordained that the others, the millions, shall toil and spin, and make things pleasant for us." But has he? Ask yourselves that question seriously, you of the Gilded Legions. Where is your authority for so saying, for so thinking?

The millions are awakening to the doubt that your position is a false one. Nay, they have awakened. They say you have inherited as often as not by a forged will, or in spite of will, by force and fraud. They say that the Eternal Father must will that all his children shall enjoy

alike—shall inherit alike—or else he is no just Father.

They may be wrong. Who shall say? For are we not all, like Festus of old, uncertain what truth is? But we can all see the signs and portents of the time, and he were a bold or a blind man who would say they were for "set fair." The "masses" have been reading in the books, and they have learned some things — learned them imperfectly it may be; still their reading has put ideas into their heads. They have learned that the forces that have worked for social upheaval have in all ages been held wrong, criminal even, and denounced and punished as such until they have succeeded. When they have succeeded, and the new order has been established on a firm basis, that order has become God's order, and has been hailed as the condition of things in which a wise Providence has placed the children of men.

The masses, as just remarked, have learned these things, and much more to boot, with the result that it is not now as it has been heretofore. You cannot, for instance, legislate as you did formerly, making a law to suit yourselves, the few, and calling that the right. The millions are now the lawgivers, and what they decide upon to-day as the right, that to-morrow must be the accepted and legalised right.

One might tarry awhile here to remark on the futility of the highest seats of learning, the universities. In them are congregated hosts of men with means and leisure to study the laws and constitution of this universe in which we live, and to discover the best means of framing and governing society. But how very little they do in this regard. For the most part they seem to spend their time over worn-out superstitions and philosophies, that would have been buried and forgotten long ago, were it not for these seats of learning keeping them alive.

Hence we see how the new truths and fresh ideas, coming up as they ever seem to do from the lowermost ranks of society—where they are begotten and gestated in travail and pain—always take them by surprise. It was so with the doctrines that led to the French Revolution. They were the offspring of no one person's brain. They were generated amid the suffering and starving masses of the people, and it was only gradually, albeit with ever-increasing vigour, that the inarticulate cries with which their birth was heralded to the world, became translated into articulate human speech. Speech was ever at first but a cry, and the highest philosophy an unformulated feeling or notion. Thus it arose, no doubt, that the doctrines which farthered the French Revolution, were not known in the

universities over there. Had there been wise men looking ahead, and studying the masses, as they ought, instead of poring over the old rag-bags of antiquity, they might have guided that whirlwind somewhat. Then the outcome might have been very different. For, had the French aristocracy not withstood so unwisely the forces of the Revolution—had they not tried by every means in their power still to deceive and beguile the people—once more to regain the upper hand, and, by force or fraud, to keep the masses down in their old servitude, in their ghastly misery and degradation, the checked flood would not have risen so high, the devastating sweep of the waters would not have carried away so much, its cleansing and healing would have been more effectual, its destruction less.

Shall we repeat the folly of that time now? or shall we not rather with wise forbearance and calmest reason, take counsel of the elements of upheaval and revolt, and by patient study try to evolve out of the tumult a humaner order and a surer-founded peace?

The human mind has shown itself capable of much. It has shown itself at times, in noble individual cases, as occasionally in mass—it has shown itself capable of touching almost the divine; but, alas! it has also shown itself capable of sinking lower than the ravening brute. We

see the two forces still working side by side, now the one threatening to get the upper hand, now the other rising like an angelic spirit, and with the breath of its wings, and the affluence and glory of its voice, checking the tigerish brood, and making the human heart leap onward and upward as to possess its promised beatitude.

But the outlook is dim and troubled, and we know not which, in the coming struggle, will show itself the stronger — angel or demon — tigerish claw or claspen hand.

CHAPTER II

"There shall be a new heaven and a new earth."

Let us look at the condition of society and the attitude of man towards it a little closer. Never possibly in the history of mankind was there a time of such clashing and ferment of ideas as is to be witnessed now in every field of human inquiry; and as at bottom thought is the formative principle of society, it follows that there never was a time when society was undergoing, or was threatened with so much change. It is, in fact, no exaggeration to say that the old props and stays of society are being undermined by the flood of new thought which is taking hold of the minds of men, and that if utter wreck and ruin is not to follow, fresh ones must be framed and built in upon the foundations of the old.

Upon the qualities that may be possessed by the next two or three generations, therefore, it depends very largely what shape society will ultimately take. Old principles of cohesion are being tested and found wanting; old formulas are being rent into shreds and patches; old faiths pulverised into the nothingness whence they came.

In all this no one capable of thinking will venture to assert that only the evil is threatened: some good will doubtless perish with the bad. In the process of winnowing a portion of the grain is sure to go with the chaff. It would be strange indeed if, when nearly every human institution is upon its trial, some that on the whole have worked for good should not meet with the same condemnation as the evil. For when there is disease in the body politic, the innocent and the guilty are apt to suffer alike. This is the fatal blot in our human life, in our earthly destiny —the fatal blot, and yet the knot of unity, the binding link in the chain that makes us one, since, for good and for evil, we are one, and cannot get apart.

To thoughtful observers it appears to be the forgetfulness of this fact which has been chiefly instrumental in bringing about the present turmoil. Whether truly or not, they assert that there has long been a tendency on the part of the rich and well-to-do to overlook their common humanity with the humble worker, and to thank God, as a speaker recently put it, that He has blessed them above his step-children the poor. Hence, to a large extent, our present difficulties. One part of society is up in arms against the other—is determined that the present form of society shall not continue to exist, that it shall be

either ended or mended. What the outcome will be no man can tell. But that it will be wildly disastrous or the reverse, according as we are wise or not, no one with the elements of just thought within him will deny. The important, the essential thing, then, is to inquire what are the causes of the present widespread upheaval of thought, whither is it tending, what is going to take the place of that which goes—in short, what is to be the vitalising, formative principle of the future?

These are momentous questions, and on the answering of them in wisdom or in folly depends the world's weal or woe for generations to come.

There are those who see nothing but evil in change. They see nothing but disaster, although, on the whole, the ages have advanced from darkness to comparative light, from savageism and barbarism to approximate civilisation. The people of such contracted vision see in the existing agitation of thought, and in the present demand for reform, nothing but a headlong rush towards chaos, a downward plunge to anarchy. The wise, however, will have no such fear. Human nature is still human nature, and it is as natural for men to fall into ordered and governed ways of living as for elements in certain conditions to crystallise. Society, in

short, is a sort of crystallisation. But it has, or appears to have, fallen into unhealthy forms of crystallisation. Hence the efforts we see on every hand, in every country, to remedy what is wrong, and to bring back a condition of health out of a state of disease.

What will be the result, whether more health or more disease, even the wisest and most discerning cannot forecast. All that can be predicted with certainty is, that the outcome of all this agitation of thought will be in strictest accordance with the sum of the nation's—of the world's wisdom. What that practical wisdom may be worth, and whether it will eventuate in giving the fluid mass of humanity a more stable and salutary shape than our present society exhibits, are questions of the gravest moment, questions too which it behoves every man anxiously to ponder. This is no time for hasty conclusions—for the impatient dismissal of awkward problems. When the rumbling of the volcano is heard we had best bestir ourselves. To idle by the way with jest and limpid laughter when the mother of the earthquake is in labour were the height of folly. Folly it would be too to make light of the ferment of which revolutions are born. And will any one venture to deny that such leaven is now astir in the very bosom and entrails of society? If such there be let him

look abroad. Should he, after casting his glance over the world, be able to console himself with the view that fifty years hence society will be as it is to-day, with strife still "father and king," then he must indeed be a sanguine man. To those less optimistic the question is not whether we are on the eve of momentous changes, but to what extent those changes will go ; not whether revolutionary forces are at work, but what will be the complexion society will eventually assume under the influence of those forces.

If we inquire of history we shall find that the forces which have been chiefly instrumental in the making of revolutions, whether silent and slow, or swift and violent, have arisen from beneath, not from above ; they have come from the "masses" rather than from the "classes"—to use the terms which, of chance coinage though they be, seem to mark the ruling evil of the time. Looking, then, for the forces chiefly active in the lower strata of society, what do we find? We see a democracy increasing in education, a democracy becoming more and more independent and self-reliant, a democracy growing daily more inquiring and thoughtful; and lastly, a democracy that is becoming ever more dissatisfied with things as they are, ever more distrustful of those who have been their teachers, their guides, their rulers, ever more convinced that no man's interests are safe

in the keeping of another—no, even though that other were an archangel.

It is a terrible conviction that has forced itself upon them. So long as they trusted their interests to the "classes" they were betrayed: so, at least, they believe and affirm. The masses are beginning to see now with the keenness of newly awakened intelligence; and it is in no dubious tones that they are summing up what they deem to be the effect of those generations of work. "Deceived, cheated, betrayed" are the terms in which they characterise that work as it affects themselves. Anyone may convince himself of the fact, if he will put his ear to the throbbing heart of the people. The indictment, true or false, is a terrible one, and ought to make the so-called ruling classes—the classes which have ruled for generations—redden with shame or quiver with indignation. And who of them will venture to say it is not in part, if not wholly, true? Who will venture to affirm that there is not, at least, substantial ground for the indictment? If in nothing else, it is true in that the classes have withheld from their brothers of the masses that which is also a right—sympathy.

The democracy—not yet fully instructed, and, therefore, liable to error—believe their indictment to be true, and, believing it, they demand to have a share in the controlling and governing

of the world, in order that their interests may be no longer overlooked. They demand, not a shadowy, delegated share, but a substantial and personal one. For they have come to see —this long-suffering, *brute* people—that somehow (though quite justly, of course), a share in the governing of the world means a share in the good things of the world also. They have come to see that those "good things" have always managed to gravitate from the governed to the governing.

The fact is very curious: it looks like a law of nature, and doubtless it is a law of depraved or undeveloped human nature. Perceiving this, then, Demos is saying to himself: "If we had a hand in the governing, some of the good things might come to us also." These slowly awakening masses may be grievously mistaken, but that is their thought.

The question is, how are we going to meet that thought? For thought does not long remain thought, but, like "the word," it is apt to be made flesh, to become life, and to translate itself into acts. An abstract idea gestating in the brains of one generation is very likely to take a concrete form in the next. Put into concrete form, then, this dream of the democracy means—what? Neither more nor less than that it is their intention to divide the world

more equally with the rich; in other words, that they intend to reconquer a fair share of the world's goods. Their newly-acquired impulse for reading has taught them that such reconquests and divisions have taken place again and again; and, in spite of decalogues, the heavens have not fallen. They think that with justice another division might be insisted upon, and God's statute of limitation not be violated. Nay, they even dream that a new heaven and a new earth might thereby be brought into being—a renewed earth that would be to them as a heaven.

Can they carry out their wish? Those who know the masses will say, "Yes, if they will only be wise." Those who do not know them—the "classes," that is—will smile, perhaps, a cynical smile at the question, and point to the too easily assumed fact that the stability of society is based upon bayonets and machine guns. In this they reason from what has gone before. Because revolts and insurrections have been put down in that way in times past, they think the method a panacea. They overlook the changed conditions. They forget that not only are the upper classes, they whom Arnold called the Barbarians, greatly changed, but the lower also. "A great part of the artizans have ceased to belong to the 'lower classes' in the sense in which the term was

originally used," says a thoughtful writer;[1] "and some of them already lead a more refined and noble life than did the majority of the upper classes even a century ago." Many of them, moreover, could give points to members of the aristocracy in all that concerns the attributes of higher manhood, being better read and more truly educated than they, and what is more, capable of a profounder devotion to altruistic principle.

And these workers, it will be found, are almost to a man on the side of change—in favour of opposing to that "law of the beasts" which, we are told on authority, "is supreme in all questions of national existence and activity," the higher law of human being; that is, they would turn the edge of the savage cosmic process of selection by an appeal to the ethical principle interwoven in the subtlest manner with the very substance and essential being of man.

It is upon these men that the hopes of the working classes rest. They are forming, the world over, a body of opinion that must, sooner or later, have its effect upon the constitution of society. Nor are these leaders lacking the support and sanction of some of the highest thinkers. "Any one who is acquainted with the state of the population of all great industrial centres,"

[1] Professor Marshall in his "Principles of Economics."

wrote the late Professor Huxley, "whether in this or other countries, is aware that, amidst a large and increasing body of that population, *la misère* reigns supreme. . . . There is not a single large manufacturing city which is free from a vast mass of people whose condition is exactly that described, and from a still greater mass who, living just on the edge of the social swamp, are liable to be precipitated into it by any lack of demand for their produce." [1]

Whoever approaches, with a view to diagnose, this disease of the body politic is struck at the very outset with the too prevailing and ever-present conditions. "At the one pole," says Kidd, "we have the continued appropriation and accumulation of surplus value, with the ever-increasing wealth and power of those in whose hands it is concentrated. At the other end we have the progressive enslavement and degradation of the exploited classes." [2] Man seems to see in the resulting conflict something of the inevitableness of a natural law. "Along," says he, "with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital, who usurp and monopolise all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation; but with this grows also the revolt of the working class, a class

[1] "Social Diseases and worse Remedies." [2] "Social Evolution."

always increasing in number, and disciplined, united, organised by the very mechanism of the process of capitalist production itself."[1]

The worst feature of this "mass of misery," with its widespread food-lack and general deprivation, is the effect it has upon the higher part of man's nature. Insufficiency of sustenance, whether in animals or plants, tells first upon the more delicate parts of the organism. We know that in plants, by careful nourishment, that which is the end and acme of its existence, the flower or fruit may be greatly improved. Many of our finest flowers and nearly all our fruits have been thus produced in their highest perfection. There are few gardeners who have not had it forced upon their experience how both fruit and flowers will gradually deteriorate if deprived of proper and sufficient nourishment or otherwise stinted of the conditions natural to their well-being.

The same law holds good of human life. Want and deprivation gradually sap it of all its highest and noblest characteristics, and so leave it weakened and brutalised. But if misery does this on the one hand, luxury and the turning of the human soul, in Ruskin's phrase, into a "covetous machine" produce an almost equally deplorable effect on the other. Consequently we have, as the result,

[1] *Das Capital*, by Karl Marx.

degradation at both extremes of society, and thus our poor human nature, wing-clipped and enfeebled, struggles vainly to live in accordance with the ideal fashioned and indelibly imprinted within it.

CHAPTER III

"Multitudes, Multitudes."

HERE then are the two forces—the two factions, if you will—the one facing the other in growing hostility. They have not yet separated themselves into two clearly-cut armies—God forbid that they ever should!—but the fight, desultory in the main, is going on nevertheless. Detachments are engaging here and there, larger bodies marshalling and manœuvring from time to time. We hear the din and clamour of the strife, and we watch the result with growing anxiety. The numbers of the contending parties appear to increase daily, the interests involved to become larger, the area of the struggle wider. Formerly the judgment, the skill in deploying forces, the wise tactics were all on the side of the classes, that is, of capital. It is not so now. Though the masses are the masses still, they are not a mob. The workers have begun to grow heads. Their opponents—those who fight for vested interests—see this, and are apt to show heat and temper as the result. That is a mistake, because it is unwise.

The time is one for the calmest wisdom. Any

levity, any precipitancy, might lead to a repetition of the error of 1789, and once more turn what might be a peaceful renovation and reformation into a world-tragedy. There is, unfortunately, no sign of any forthcoming saviour of society—no voice that is strong enough and pure enough to sound forth an awakening. Much might be done by such a one to inform and enlighten the vast mass of selfishness, ignorance, and apathy among those who will be the first to suffer when the upheaval comes, should it come in anger and fury—those who float gaily on the surface of society, the thoughtless, self-indulgent, with hearts so far as concerns the world's bondslaves to toil —as hard as the nether mill-stone.

What have they done, or what do they care to do—the majority of them—so long as they can eat, drink, and be merry, wear fine clothes, without toiling or spinning, and put in an appearance at church on Sunday to let "God" know that they are quite acquiescent touching the beautiful and beneficent order of his universe, through which he allows them to glide so easily, while others delve and drudge, and spend their days in darkness and misery?

Is this strong language? The world's disease needs energetic measures to cure, and if strong talk can serve any useful end, so long as the evil has not reached a fatal stage, it is better to

have that than wait until the scalpel has to be applied.

The remedy lies with the classes. If they think that the picture is too strong, let them with a little patience consider a few things. Let them for a little while put themselves in the place of those who are at the opposite end of the social scale to themselves, who, though they may not be so ornamental as their "betters," are vastly more useful, and while not usually called "noble," are in real truth the "salt of the earth."

Suppose, therefore, O idle ones, so far as any "sweat of the face" is concerned—suppose you deign for a little while to look upon the ways you know not, to see how the multitudes of your brothers and sisters (it is your own phrase, taken from your outwardly accepted religion, although inwardly your worship is of a dust-eaten ancestry) exist, slaving that you may be idle, spinning that you may dance in fine raiment, dying before their time that you and your children may live long.

We need not go far to get a sight of the vast human swarm that lies strong and multitudinous as the deep at the foundations of society. It seethes, literally seethes, all about us. Growing, too, in numbers out of all proportion to those whom it lives to keep in idleness and luxury, as well as changing yearly, almost daily, in

character, it may be worth while to give it a little consideration, to inquire as to its essential features, to calculate what latent power, for good or evil, lies within it, to reflect on its position and destiny.

It is customary to attribute to the "common people" many vices, and but few, very few, virtues. They are coarse, they are brutal, they are drunken, they are licentious, they are improvident, they are——. But what need to enumerate the catalogue of their vices? Who is there that has not heard them recited, almost *ad nauseam?* They are to be heard on every hand, well-nigh from every tongue, among the classes. But where is there to be found, amongst these people, one who has a word to say on the other side? To them the masses truly form in the abstract a social pariah whom everybody finds a pleasure to kick, and very few to say one word in praise of.

And yet the fact remains, that this long-suffering multitude, this amorphous, neglected mass of human beings which rests at the base of society, and moils, and spins, and produces, and is coarse, and rough, and brutal, and potent for all sorts of mischief, abides for the most part still and innocuous. Yea, though it so often wants—wants bread even—it remains quiescent, orderly. Who of you, rich, that has not heard

of the Lancashire cotton famine? Who but too well remembers the miners' lock-out of 1893, and their struggle for a living wage? Who can recall that episode without a thrill of wonder and admiration? And then the dockers' strike for his poor miserable sixpence. Think of it!

The majority of these people are hard and steady workers, satisfied to live for a week, for a month even, on what would barely furnish forth a rich man's dinner-table. They manage to keep their families too on it, and to bring them up, on the whole, in decency and respectability. The majority teach them also to be God-fearing and contented with their lot—contented, mind you, with a wage that barely allows them to live, that does not allow the major part of them to live in decent comfort!

Considering their immense power, say for helping themselves at a pinch, is there anything more wonderful in this wide world than the spectacle of this contented multitude diligently and devotedly working to produce that which they do not enjoy, doggedly slaving for a crust that others may have a whole loaf, spread too, and plenteously garnished to boot?

If you will only consider it aright, it is the most wonderful thing in this wonderful creation of ours, indeed, it is nothing less than a daily miracle.

Do you know anything that affords a glimpse into a greater mystery than any with which we are confronted—the mystery of the potency and permanency of ideas? But ideas, for all that, are not eternal. Gradually a new thought may take the place of a world-old one. Sometimes the new thought—the new idea—may come suddenly, as by a miracle. It may even assume the form of a gospel, as we know certain ideas did a century ago. And what has happened once may happen again.

Suppose the stolid, and for the most part silent masses, were one day to agree together as one man and say, "Let us have no more of this, but let us enjoy with the rest—it is our right," where would your present society be? Consider what the masses have done beforetime by getting an idea into their heads, and willing, as it were, with one mind. Against the united volition of these seemingly inert, stolid multitudes even bayonets and machine guns would be of little avail, for are not your wielders of the machine guns and the bayonets likewise of the people?

There can be no doubt it is in the power of the democracy to reconquer the world, or a rightful portion of it, if they will, that is, if they will be wise and united. The crux, of course, lies in the exercise of will and wisdom

combined. Can they so train themselves as to work with united will for the attainment of their ends, as the aristocracy have done time out of mind? Moreover, can they train themselves to the exercise of that patient, suffering, and far-seeing wisdom without which united action is vain?

That is the point the multitudes have to, and probably will, remember: that the upper classes have held their own because they have always had the wisdom to know no division where their interests were in question. Whig and Tory, Liberal and Conservative, they have always fought shoulder to shoulder, or rather head to head, for their own hand; they have ever formed a firm and united phalanx when the rights, the privileges, or the safety of their order have been at stake. They have always known how to make their point invulnerable, because, in the first place, they have understood themselves, and because, in the second place, they have known how to divide the common enemy; for as such they have always regarded the people, the masses, whenever they have manifested a desire to act or think for themselves.

Let the democracy, then, follow their example, as they seem determined to do, and the probability is that nothing can prevent them from getting all they want. Nothing can prevent

them, that is, from reconstituting society on a more human, and at the same time on a more humane basis.

Perhaps the classes may say, in answer to all this—and they may honestly believe, as many undoubtedly do—that, whatever its defects, whatever its minor shortcomings, the existing organisation of society is the work of the Almighty. But is it? It is no good believing—it will not help us in the hour of need to believe—a thing that is not true. And what evidence have we to prove that society as it at present exists is any more of divine ordination than we have that such would be the case, say in the year 1910, if in the meantime there had been a turning of the social organism upside down, leaving the upper classes where their social inferiors now are, and placing the lower orders in the present seats of the mighty?

Does anybody to-day think that was a divine order of society which obtained in France before the Revolution, when men and women were literally ground to the earth by heavy tailles and other taxes to support a cruel and licentious aristocracy, and often had perforce to eat grass and garbage of all sorts to keep themselves alive because their betters had left them nothing. Hardly, one would think. And yet the people of that time were as assured of it as any of us

can be to-day that the present order of society is divinely ordered.

We have had many conditions of society in England. A condition of things in William the Conqueror's time, when it was instant death to touch Duke William's lordly red deer. That state and condition of society continued to exist with very little change until the Barons compelled John Lackland to grant them a charter of rights—forced him, be it remembered, at the point of the sword.

At that time and for long afterwards the poor had no rights, and no one thought of lifting a hand for them. They were for the most part attached to the glebe, and when the harvests were good and peace reigned in the land, they enjoyed the rude plenty of their masters. But there were bad times then as now, times of depression and scarcity, when it was hard for men to live and slow torture to die. Langland has given us a picture of what the lives of the poor then were. It is a picture that, in his own words, "reuthe is to rede." No one then had shown so much pity, manifested such keen human sympathy for the sorrows of the poor; few have shown such deep compassion for them since—no one has set it forth in such an epic of lamentation as he. It is impossible to turn the pages of his book without feeling something

of his poignant commiseration, of his almost hopeless outlook. The astounding thing is that his words apply to-day as truthfully as they did in his own—separated from us though he be by a stretch of over five hundred years.

We do not find, however, that "Piers Plowman" produced any marked effect. It was a hard and pitiless age, one in which the most callous and brutal survived. We read of John Ball and Wat Tyler risings and of their ruthless suppression, the latter it will be remembered, by the foulest of treachery and lies; for even truth and fair dealing were considered too good for those down-trodden sons of toil. Nor have we got much beyond that method yet when the workers are concerned and the thing can be done in the dark. Witness the loaded dice with which the engineers were played.

The poor misguided, or at least miscalculating serfs had heard, probably from the priests, of the charter which the Barons had obtained some generations before, and thought they too might secure a similar charter of rights if they made their demand. They needed it badly enough, God knows! So, in this dumb way they gave expression to their aspirations for freedom, for a more manly life, for something approaching equality as sons of a reputed common Father. For the plain word of his promise was then

beginning to find its way among them. But —the accepted Christ notwithstanding — they were no more than vermin under the feet of their "betters," the nobles, who would hear of no such aspirations. Their cry was "no compromise, the serfs were their goods and their goods could not be taken from them except with their own consent, and that, said they, we will never give were we all to die in one day."

The attitude which the nobles then took, they have always assumed towards the lower orders when any question of rights or enfranchisement has arisen — with this difference, that, as the ages have rolled on, they have weakened down through luxury and sloth, and are in consequence a less robust race than they were aforetime.

As the generations roll on, however, we emerge into a broader light and see the order of society changing. We see modern history taking its rise in the person of King Harry with his wives of precarious tenure, and his *ad captandum* method of dealing with the monks and the monasteries. Thousands to this day believe that in doing as he did Henry VIII. iniquitously overturned a God-ordained condition of society. But those who had their share of the spoils lifted no voice against the act. Many to this day are still enjoying the position which their ancestors received as a sop for their acquiescence in this

wholesale robbery of church and poor; but it is doubtful whether their enjoyment of the wealth and consideration accruing therefrom is any the less keen because of the unjust way it was come by. Possibly they never gave the subject as much as a thought.

In the century next following we behold another picture, and a stirring one it is. With an assurance that had been truly splendid if it had been backed by more grandeur of character, we see our kings claiming a "divine right" to govern a "live" people as they liked; and we see, on the other hand, that same people—at first in their dumb, awkward way—denying that right, arraying themselves in embattled ranks to contest it, and finally winning the game. It was a tough fight, and took nearly a hundred years to win. But the result was one which should be burned into the brain and heart of every English child—it was the assertion and the establishment of the divine right of the people of these realms and of all realms, to be governed, not by one man, or a hundred, or a thousand men, but according to their own will and choice, and by some approximate rule or method of justice and equity.

So we might go through the acts of kings and parliaments down to our own day, and show that after all the acts of the people are the acts of God, that the broad aim of justice and right in the end

sanctifies all changes, eruptions, reformations, though they tear up roots that have been endeared and sanctioned by long endurance and widely-ramified associations. The only thing that is not justifiable in this universe is the suffrance of a wrong after it has been proved to be a wrong. Moreover, in the long-run the setting right of a wrong can do no man and no nation any permanent injury, but only good, howsoever long it may have been hardened into custom and wont, and however deep its roots may have struck down into the spine and marrow of the national life.

That is a truth that should be set down in red in the Bibles of every people under the sun.

CHAPTER IV

"Behold I will set a plumbline in the midst of my people."

THERE is one thing which has ever stood in the way of the free development of the people of these islands. They have always been too prone to the worship of rank and title. At the root the feeling is not a bad one. It is a glorious thing to have good leaders, to be proud of them, and to be willing to follow their lead at all risks and through all peril for the national good. Such leaders we have had: to that fact we owe much of our greatness as a people—to the fact of the good leadership in combination with brave fighters, who were ever ready to stand like a living wall against any danger and against any odds.

To the long ages in which lords and commons stood in this intimate relationship to each other we owe the admiration and awe of the latter, lingering after the qualities which bred the feeling have long since departed. For the old noble has gone, the old leader is no more. The man who shared the land with his retainers; the man who grew up surrounded by the yeomen and peasants who fought by his side in the hour of

trial, whose lives, notwithstanding difference of rank and wealth, were much the same as his, and who were near enough and known enough to call out his sympathies and his goodwill in times of sorrow and distress, as well as in periods of rejoicing—that man departed long ago, his place being taken by one who first of all robbed his co-partners in the land, and then, having deprived them of their independence, scorned them, and put an almost impassible barrier betwixt them and himself.

This self-degradation of a class has had results that are very perilous to the Commonwealth.

It was long the boast of Britons that as a nation we were the freest people in the world. There was a time when that proud claim was undoubtedly true; but those days have passed away. Other peoples now enjoy freedom as great as ours, and greater equality. We showed them the way to liberty; they have set us the example of that greater liberty, equality.

To-day it would be difficult to find amongst civilised communities a country in which, side by side with so much general freedom, there exists a system of such flagrant inequality before the law as in this country of ours. For a so-called free country we are the most privilege-ridden people in Europe. We cannot do anything without asking the permission and almost

craving the indulgence of a class which has the power to put a check on all progress, which has rarely given its consent to any improvement in the condition of the people but it has had to be wrung from it by force or fear.

Through all the social and political changes that have taken place in the course of the centuries, the power-holding class have not only shown themselves strong enough to maintain their position of privilege, but in some respects to widen and deepen it. In hardly a country in Europe can such a condition of things be matched. All over the Continent aristocracies have come and gone, swept away or modified by social and political changes; but here, through all revolutions and all dynasties, the privileged class has remained practically the same, its "rights" and license checked and curtailed to some extent, but its privileges as wide as ever, and in some respects more deeply riveted than ever.

In some respects it has become a greater danger to the other sections of the community than it was at any previous time, through its alliance with the capitalists. "In the transition from the military to the industrial type of society in England," says Kidd,[1] "it has become largely transformed into the capitalist class. It is still

[1] "Social Evolution."

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the party of wealth, prestige, leisure, and social influence and position. On the other side we have a party—including the greater part of those who lead toilsome, strenuous lives for the least reward. In England, where the course of social development has been less interrupted by disturbing influences than in many other countries, these opponents correspond more or less closely to the two great historic parties in the State. In France, in the United States, in Germany, and in other countries we have, in reality, the same two parties no less distinctly in opposition, although local and particular causes to some extent prevent them from thus clearly confronting each other continuously and all along the line as organised political forces."

Looked at broadly this spectacle of the persistence of a class is not without its touch of grandeur. It must needs be a tough and sturdy race that can hold on like that, and through centuries of upheaval and revolution, keep its head clear above the welter of passion and strife, and, after all, still come in at the top. Yes, looked at from that point of view, there is a touch of grandeur about it ; but regarded from another point—what then? We have the spectacle of a class that has ever been cold-blooded and selfish, that has sought no ends but its own, that has betrayed every trust, that has preferred might to

right, that has long forgotten its once proud motto, *noblesse oblige.*

No reasonable man will deny that in the classes as they once existed in England, that is, an aristocracy of culture and refinement, a middle class composed of yeomen and traders, and a lower class made up of the peasant and artizan, each dependent upon and eventually helpful to the other, we had an almost ideal state of society; the happiness and well-being of one sustaining and buttressing the safety and well-being of another. But when the noble forgot his old glory, and, allying himself with the plutocrat, became a mere money-grabbing "boss," then commenced the inevitable downgrade of national greatness and national happiness. For the colossal fortunes of the plutocracy, their idleness, their luxury, and, above all, their peculiar and implacable hardness of heart—egged on by the gospel of political economy—have brought about a war of interests which bid fair to produce a revolution, the like of which the world has not yet seen.

The astonishing thing is that while the English have had the firmness and resolution to cut the claws of their kings, and to give them to understand that they can only reign by and in accordance with the will of the people, they have neglected to place the nobles under equal re-

straint, with the result that we now see them sit upon the nation like so many robber-barons, setting the example of a social and industrial tyranny which is the ideal condition of all who acquire money, and hampering at every turn all true progress.

There is not a similar spectacle to be seen anywhere in a free country. From the time when they lorded it over their serfs, and claimed the privilege of levying private war one upon another, the aristocracy have acted as if the whole country were made for them, and no one else was to be considered as against their pleasure and their profit, and only kept in check by the wholesome discipline of the Crown. It is rare to find one who has acted a truly generous part; but if there has ever been a project to spoil the poor or to take advantage of the industrious, members of this class have not been far to seek.

Not only do they sit astride of the country on their broad acres, which, in a country of boasted free trade, are kept exempt from the ordinary processes of trade; but in a society, the very blood and breath of whose existence is, so to speak, a fierce and pitiless competition, they are protected from its effects by a double vallum of protection and privilege. The effect has been to make the weight of competition fall with

double force upon the exploited classes, and this continues with almost unabated pressure, notwithstanding the political enfranchisement of the workers. "Political liberty," says the author of 'Social Evolution,' "has not enabled the poorer classes to make headway against the enormous influence which these classes wield to the extent to which many of the old reformers expected. By the combination of the capitalist classes into rings, trusts, syndicates, and the like associations for the universal control of production and the artificial keeping up of prices, the community finds the general welfare threatened by a general complication which the reformers of the past can scarcely be said to have counted upon." [1]

This pernicious influence is intensified by the most exceptional and unreasonable privilege of all, a House particular and special to a class, which is regarded by its members, not as a chamber to consider measures for the welfare of the commonwealth as a whole, but for the safeguarding and enhancement of their own vested interests.

In this and other unfair and inequitable class privileges we have a condition of things that today militates more than almost anything else against social progress, and that tends to perpetuate what Professor Marshall designates "the cruelty and waste of irresponsible competition

[1] Page 216.

and the licentious use of wealth."[1] It is in the curtailment, if not in the complete abolition, of these privileges that lies the only hope of further advance towards a more rational and equitable state of society.

It is impossible for those who desiderate and work for the progressive humanisation of the conditions of life to blink the fact that the first stronghold to attack and demolish is this grossest and most belated of the many remnants of feudalism which yet afflict a long-suffering people. This is the Bastile of the new revolution which must be brought down before anything else effective can be done. Its towering insolence is a threat to the true liberty of the industrial classes, an insult to their manhood. If England were a conquered country, and these were the dominant race, the conquerors, their position of privilege could not be greater, their abuse of the power in their hands more intolerable. Whoever else suffers, they must be buttressed against loss. Although when trade has been bad here, and thousands have been suffering from want of work, it has hardly been possible to get the Government to sanction measures for assisting emigration, or any scheme in aid of the distressed; yet let the "noble" classes utter an ignoble complaint about their

[1] "Journal of the Royal Statistical Society," Dec. 1890.

impoverishment, and straightway—albeit usually by some indirect method — the legislature has come to their assistance.

It is their wont to pretend that the aid is not for themselves—they protest that it is not, that it is for some national purpose; but it goes into their pockets nevertheless. We have recently had one or two samples of this sort of thing. One was the abolition of the porterage fee on telegrams up to a limit of three miles—a measure which spared the pockets of the wealthy at the expense of the ratepayers. A still more unjustifiable example was the Agricultural Rating Act. And yet we hear plethoric dukes wailing Jeremiads against the bugbear of Socialism when it is proposed to give decent conditions of life to workers, not from imperial revenues, but at a small initial cost to the ratepayers, whom these same dukes and company bleed to the very bone and marrow, and give nothing in return.

These are the superior classes, the "nobles," those whose nobility obliges them to distinguish themselves by higher qualities, by a loftier courtesy, by an ideal above that of the ordinary man; and yet, should a whiff of the common depression which touches most men, and grips the bellies of thousands, blow upon their fortunes, though never so slightly, lo! they will be seen to crave aid from the funds drawn from the blood

and sinews of the people. These aids they demand by reason of their position, and by reason of their privileges they are able to command them.

A large number of persons are blinded enough to sanction such things because they imagine these people are in some way a safeguard to the State, because they form a bulwark of some sort. But in truth, for long years, they have been little of a bulwark against anything except against the spread of popular rights, against the removal of social injustice, and against the granting of everything like an approach to equalisation of opportunity to all; whereby "the dead hand of feudalism" (as Marx puts it), that still presses with such cruel weight upon the people might in some measure be lightened.

It is not merely that this condition of privilege is an evil in itself, setting up a false standard of superiority; but it splits society into two broad divisions, in which the line of cleavage is one of money. There is no question of character; there is no question of greater talents, or wisdom, or benefit done to the country: these qualities are all more abundant on the lower side of the dividing line. It is entirely a question of sordid material wealth, and the man who has accumulated that—it may be by the most dishonourable practices — can almost invariably buy his way

into the sacred precinct, where worth and genius have but little chance in comparison.

Thus the anomaly is recruited, thus bolstered up; and so the tyranny of wealth is made to grow heavier year by year, until in the end the social fabric must inevitably give way and come down under the strain.

Moreover, not only is this the case, but such is the glamour of wealth, that there is always a tendency—and we see it on every side—to make our theories of government, and even of theology, square with and support this state of things. Some are biassed unwittingly, as the compass may be on a coast where ironstone abounds, though unseen; they think they are steering straight for the haven of truth, of right; but they are not. Others are conscious of the bias. The glitter is in their eyes, and they know it. They put on blinkers, and do all they can to provide them for others as well. And how willingly and innocently they are assumed by many, perhaps by the majority!

If we were wise should we permit ourselves to be hoodwinked like this? Should we not rather —as every age ought to do—re-examine every accepted theory, whether of government or religion, for ourselves, co-ordinating each point of doctrine and every fact, so to speak, to date? Thus far the world's practice has been very much

the reverse, requiring each new truth to focus with the old and too often worn-out and threadbare dogmas of the past, or be rejected.

This is very largely the case with our political economics. Because such a condition of things exists, the theorist finds that it is the best that could be, all things considered, and that it is based on immutable laws. As to looking beneath the surface, that is rarely done.

Take one of the most insidious conditions of society to-day—one of the things that perhaps acts more than any other towards the moral and social degradation of one half of the human race —the power of money to go on increasing and breeding itself. Those who live upon their investments, is it they who produce the margin of profit arising from the use of their invested capital, or is it the money of itself? It is neither the one nor the other. For if they and their money were left to themselves, nothing would result. You may save your eggs, and you may put them by to hatch; but unless the mother hens are there, and in the mood to sit, the chicks will be far to seek.[1]

Is it not much the same with your money? Save as much as you will, put it out to breed,

[1] Of course it may be replied that one can employ an incubator. But this does not invalidate the argument, because the incubator cannot do its work without the care and supervision of the worker.

to multiply; but if the producer, the worker, be not there, how much will it become? If you decide to embark it in trade or manufactures in distracted Turkey, in effete Persia, or even in poverty-stricken Italy, what will it return you? As much, and with the same safety, as in a thrifty, law-abiding country like England? And does your money multiply as freely in Great Britain when the masses are disturbed and in distress as when they are quiet and prosperous?

In short, the reproductiveness of your money depends upon the character of the community. Without an organised society there could be no money to invest, there could be but little accumulation of wealth, gold would be of no value; nothing would be worth much except food, clothing and shelter, and the instruments that helped to produce them—all perishable. Hence, by the growth of society, commodities are given a value which they could not otherwise possess, and according to the stability and security of that society, such value is given the character of equableness and stability. Every individual forming part of the community contributes towards the general result, that is, towards the commonweal, but most of all those who, by their industry, their expertness, their genius for invention, and so forth, help to shorten or augment processes of production or in any way to increase

the conveniences of society. And, as regards these considerations, none have contributed so much as the workers.

The worker therefore is worth considering—if only as the goose that lays the golden egg. He helps, and helps enormously, to make your investments good and sound; he is the other half of the bargain: nay, he is more than half. You may have the money, but without his industry, without his aid as a consumer also, it would be valueless. Of yourselves, you, as capitalists, could not make it produce one per cent. You are dependent for all you have, first upon his labour, and secondly upon him as a consumer. He is as two parts to your one.

Thus everyone who accumulates wealth does so not of himself alone, but by means of those about him. Even supposing that he has a certain amount of money to begin with, his capital can do nothing of itself, any more than a bushel of the finest seed can produce a crop of wheat without soil, labour, sunshine and rain. His ability may count for something; but even with that and his capital he can do nothing without the society in which he lives and of which he forms a part. That society, in short, is the soil in which his fortune grows, and without which his capital is absolutely valueless.

Now, the agriculturist who rents a farm is

required to treat his land with consideration. He must not take everything from it and give nothing in return. He may not sell the straw as well as the corn. In many cases he may sell nothing but the corn.

Why should not the same principle apply to the man who derives wealth from the community? He obtains his riches therefrom partly by employing some of its members as workers, and partly by supplying them and others with what he produces. Were it not for the large population he could not accumulate great wealth. In sparsely populated communities great fortunes are not made. Moreover, every manufacturer, trader, merchant, etc., owes something to the gradually and laboriously acquired experience of the community, without which he could not carry on his operations.

Like the farmer, therefore, is he not bound in fairness to return something to the source of his wealth? He must not impoverish it by taking so much from it and returning nothing in its place.

Political economy has during the past twenty years been developing greatly broadened views; it is boldly advancing from the "wealth" to the "well-being" of nations, and it is destined sooner or later to recognise as the foundation of all true social economics the principle that there

can be no real justice as between individuals, as well as between the different sections of society, until all are enabled to enjoy something of equality in respect to the country's resources which were not made by man, and until they shall be able to enjoy them with some approach to equality of opportunity. And in what way can such equality be effected so easily and so beneficently as by the recognition of an inherent right in all to some share in the unearned increment of capital?

CHAPTER V

"The land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

If there has been one infamy of the erewhile power-holding class greater than another it has been their action in regard to the land. The chequer-board character of most parts of the country, cut up as it is into fields, still stands as evidence of the fact that in early times in England, as in other Teutonic countries, the land was held in common, the arable being divided into something like equal allotments, which were drawn lots for, or taken in rotation, annually, while the pasture was open to all for the feeding of their flocks and herds.

By the successive waves of conquest, and especially by the uprisal of the feudal system, all this was changed, though the germ of it has continued to our own days in the existence of common rights. But even so late as two centuries ago the rights of lords of the manor were exceedingly limited in comparison with the rights assumed to-day. Every careful student of history must be aware of this. The rights of the landlord in the old days were

barred and checked on every side; they were intended to be a restraining power for the good of the community, and not for personal aggrandisement. The court baron and court leet were just as ready to fine the lord as any of his tenants for any encroachment, or for the infringement of the various common rights. The idea of a quarry, a coal mine, or a sand pit being in those days monopolised by the lord of the manor, or closed at his autocratic will, would have been considered the rankest treason to the community. We have come to put up with things that would have stirred our forefathers' blood like a call to battle.

The result is that Great Britain stands altogether alone in the absolute, unchecked grasp which she has allowed her landowners to assume and tyrannously to assert.

The total area of England and Wales is, after deducting the quantity within the metropolitan area, 37,243,859 acres. How is this vast extent divided among the inhabitants?

66 persons own 1,917,076 acres.

100 persons own 3,917,641.

Less than 280 persons own 5,425,764 acres, or nearly one-sixth of the enclosed land of England and Wales.

523 persons own one-fifth of England and Wales.

710 persons own more than one-fourth of England and Wales.

874 persons own 9,267,031 acres.

In none of these calculations are the extents of woods, commons, and waste lands included.

In the County of Northumberland, which contains 1,220,000 acres, 26 persons own one-half the county.

One Englishman owns more than 186,397 acres, another more than 132,996 acres, and a third more than 102,785 acres.

A body of men, which probably does not exceed 4500, own more than 17,498,200 acres, or more than one-half of all England and Wales.

In Scotland the returns are still more startling and shameful. The total average of Scotland is 18,946,694 acres. One owner alone has 1,326,000 acres in Scotland and also 32,095 acres in England, or a total of 1,358,548 acres.

A second owner has 431,000 acres, a third owner has 424,000 acres, a fourth owner has 373,000 acres, and a fifth 306,000 acres. Twelve owners have 4,339,722 acres, or nearly one quarter of the whole of Scotland; or, in other words, a tract of country larger than the whole of Wales, and equal in size to eight English counties, namely, Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Cornwall, Cumberland, and Derbyshire.

Twenty owners have each more than 120,000 acres.

24 owners have more than 4,931,884, or more than a quarter of Scotland.

70 owners have about 9,400,000 acres, or about one-half of Scotland.

171 owners have 11,029,228 acres.

While nine-tenths of the whole of Scotland, that is, of the whole of 18,946,694 acres, belong to fewer than 1700 persons.

It is an old story how the existence of these vast properties in Scotland has led to the depopulating of immense tracts of country in order to create large deer forests. There is no return of their acreage, but the Hon. Lyluph Stanley calculates that much more than 2,000,000 acres have been cleared of hundreds of thousands of sheep, and depopulated, in order to make room for deer; or, in other words, the homes and farms and food of thousands of families have been destroyed in order to feed the deer and encourage sport, and this in a country which is alleged to be so crowded as to make it absurd to suppose that any alteration in the land laws would enable the middle or labouring classes to acquire land.

Why is it that this state of things exist? The only answer is, because of the greed of the rich, because of the unholy greed of a privileged class, which, striving and working generation after

generation, has succeeded in disinheriting the sons of the soil. Five hundred years ago, history tells us, the great majority of the agricultural population were yeomen or peasant proprietors, and there was no vagabondage, or unemployed, or pauperism in "merry England." Even so late as the beginning of last century there were millions upon millions of acres of land which were the birthright of the people, a possession which made them semi-independent. These were the common lands. But during the reigns of Queen Anne and the first three Georges, or between 1702 and 1800, upwards of three and a half millions of acres were enclosed and appropriated by the landlords. Nor did the spoliation cease with the eighteenth century; for during the first forty-two years of the present century 2,773,812 more acres were filched from the sons of toil; while between that date and 1876 an additional 699,702 acres were similarly "conveyed" from the poor to the rich.

It is this one cause more than any other that has tended to place the poorer classes in this country in so distressing a condition economically. They have nothing at the back of them; they possess no sort of natural stay or prop. Of course all cannot have their bit of land: it is not contended that they can; but under a just and equitable system of land tenure the whole labour-

ing population would not be thrown on the market, so to speak, helpless in the hands of the capitalist, because they have nothing to fall back upon. In short, it is the land monopoly which begot capitalism.

How much worse off we are in this respect now than we were about the middle of last century is seen from the fact that the total number of males and females engaged in agricultural work and food production at the present day is one and a half millions; whereas in 1769 Arthur Young estimated that out of a total population of 8,500,000 the agricultural class numbered 2,8000,00: a proportion of one in every three. With our present population of 29,000,000, the proportion is one in every nineteen.[1]

It is hardly likely that so large a proportion of the population as one in three could return to the land, with profit, even under the best of conditions; but a very large augmentation of the present proportions could be advantageously effected. Nor will some of the evils from which the country is so severely suffering be cured until restitution is made, and the land be again divided, with some approximation to equity, amongst the people. Then, and not till then, shall we see a happy and contented labouring class, every man in every village, tilling his half acre or acre, and rejoicing

[1] "The Destitute Alien in Great Britain," p. 47-8.

in something of the Creator's bounty. When this question is referred to among those who are in favour of the existing state of things, we are constantly told that small culture cannot be made to pay in England; and, moreover, it is often added, the character of the English labourer is such that, if it could be made to pay, he is not the one to do it.

Such are the constantly reiterated statements; and yet whenever there is a bit of land to be had, either to rent or to buy, there are found plenty of men willing to take it. Indeed, during the last few years—during the worst years of depression—it has been proved beyond doubt that there is a veritable land hunger in the country, and that it takes every possible means of being appeased. Richard Cobden once wrote about Dorset:—

"Dorset is a county of large estates and large farms. One landlord is said to be able to ride thirty miles from east to west on his own lands. Several have their residences in walled parks literally miles in circumference. Ask the eight millions of landed proprietors in France to exchange lots with the English people, where the labourer who cultivates the farm has no more proprietary interest in the soil than the horses he drives, and he will be struck with horror!"

Sir Robert Edgcumbe was struck by this fact, too, and one day, some few years ago, as

he was riding past a farm of 343 acres in Dorset, then in the market, the thought occurred to him: "Why not take this farm for small holdings? The tenant had to give up his occupation, and the farm was mortgaged at £5000, although a few years before it had been valued at £12,000. The rent then paid was £240 a year, and as the mortgagees did not see their way to take over the farm, they offered it for sale, fixing the amount of the mortgage as the upset price. Edgcumbe was the only bidder at £5050, at which price the property became his.

The farm consisted of a long narrow strip of land along the Dorsetshire hills. The new owner proceeded to have a careful survey made of it, and then, besides making a road right through the middle of it, had two wells sunk. The expenses entailed by these works were:—

Purchase price	£5050
Tillages and tenant right	490
Survey, and 200 lithographed maps, and plotting out the land	129
Law costs—Investigating title, drafting model form of agreement for sale, and model conveyance	13
Sinking wells	120
Cost of making a road	340
	£6142

The land was now laid out in plots of various sizes, great care being taken to apportion the value of each holding. In all, twenty-five of such holdings were created, varying in size from two to thirty-three acres, and they were offered at the apportioned prices to purchasers who were prepared to pay one-tenth of the money down, and the remainder in nine equal yearly instalments, interest being paid on the balance of unpaid instalments. To the surprise of everybody, there was a flood of applications, and not the slightest difficulty occurred in at once disposing of every bit of the land.

This was at the beginning of 1889, and by the spring of 1895, that is, within six years, the whole of the instalments were cleared off, with the exception of about £500. Considering the character of the applicants, this was a remarkable result. Amongst the number were a blacksmith, a watchmaker, eight agricultural labourers, a cooper, a railway porter, a rural postman, a carpenter, a gardener, two coachmen, a currier, two small shopkeepers, and a stonemason.

When in the occupation of the late tenant, there were employed upon the land the farmer and three agricultural labourers. Under the new conditions there were on the same land twenty-five families, counting seventy-five persons in all. The prices paid per acre varied from £7 to £25,

according to the value of the land. Besides the farm-house, there were three cottages on the estate, each of which was sold to separate purchasers. The other buyers had to put up houses to suit their condition and needs. Some built handsome cottages; others had to be content with houses of wood and corrugated iron until the balance of their purchase money was cleared off.

"There was," says the writer of the account from which I chiefly take these facts, "over the whole of the Kew estate an air of something which I cannot describe, but which is best illustrated by Arthur Young's phrase, 'the magic of ownership.' Here were people who were working for themselves. Every bit of labour they put into the holding, every fence they made, every brick they put into position, was improving the value of their own property." People round about did not seem to realise this, and were not a little surprised at the results that were reached and the transformation achieved.

Sir Robert Edgcumbe estimated the letting value of the land at the close of the late tenant's occupation at £170 a year. After six years of *petite culture* the land was valued for rateable purposes at £313, and the actual total assessment was £283, 6s. 8d. This was what the neighbouring farmers and landowners could not

understand. But it is perfectly obvious to everybody who is not blinded by prejudice in favour of the system of large estates. The writer of the article above referred to[1] cites the case of a gardener who had bought seventeen acres. "When we visited him," he says, "he was just finishing another long range of glass-houses, in which he was growing early vegetables for the markets at Bournemouth and Weymouth. He showed how he had got the lime to whitewash his range of buildings by burning the chalk in the furnace of his conservatories. It is by attention to these little matters of detail that these men succeed. And then the pigs, the poultry, and the bees all go to make up the necessary returns."

This is but one example out of many which might be adduced, including that of Earl Gray's farm at East Learmouth, by many regarded as quite a new departure, and the well-known instance of the successful establishment of a number of poor people on the land at Winterslow by Major Poore. In this case, acting upon Arthur Young's aphorism that "the magic of property turns sand into gold," Major Poore gave his people a lease for two thousand years, instead of making them freeholders, because the legal costs for a lease were less than to sell

[1] It appeared in the *Daily Chronicle*.

outright. The alacrity with which the purchase money was found by the leaseholders caused general surprise, although it need not have done, considering the amount of thrift there is among the labouring classes.

These are a few examples of what might be done, and is being done, in a small way all over the country, thus reversing the process whereby the people were dispossessed of their holdings. But this is what the rich—the "upper classes," as they like to be called—do not wish to see. "They know in their secret hearts," as Tolstoi puts it, "that the land question contains all social questions; that with its solution all special privileges would disappear, and that this question is the leading subject of the day. Yet while they pretend to care for the well-being of the masses, and while they raise for them benefit societies, factory inspection, income taxes, ay, and eight hours' working days, they carefully ignore the land question."

We have another object-lesson of the same kind in the story of the Highland crofters during the last two decades. The landlords were gradually "dinging" them out of existence by their tyranny and extortion. In the early part of the eighties they revolted, and bid fair to set the whole heather on fire. Finally a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into their grievances,

with the result that not only were the rents of their crofts lowered, their arrears reduced, if not entirely cleared off, and the tenants given security for their holdings, but in some cases their holdings were increased in size. The result has been a moral and material improvement in the condition of the crofters that forms one of the most significant object-lessons of the political history of the latter quarter of the century.

But the most significant thing of all connected with the crofter question is the fact that the inquiry proves beyond doubt that an idle class living upon the labours of others is absolutely incapable of dealing justly with those by whom so much of their wealth is produced. And by knowing what, in the course of a few years, would have become of the crofter people, if the law had not stepped in to protect them, we are able to understand how, and with what ignoble tyranny and injustice, the commoners of England, the yeomen and peasants, have been "choused" of their birthright in the land.

When the yeoman fell upon evil times, and he did not know how to make both ends meet, was Parliament asked to come to his assistance, as it has so often done for the "nobles," and so enable him to tide over the evil day, and save his freehold? No, he was left alone to his troubles, the insatiate land-grabber patiently watching his

chance, and gobbling him up the moment he was at the end of his resources. The noble did exactly the same with the peasant-holder, and when he had swallowed the peasant's portion he "went for" the common-land. The way in which the power-holding class laid their hands upon the common-lands in England, as for the crofter's land and rights in the Highlands of Scotland, constitutes one of the most precious hall-marks of aristocracy in our later social history. Even at the present hour the thing goes on ; the rich man still sets his snare for the poor man's tiny ewe lamb, while the poor man, with the needs of his children in his heart, and possibly their famishing cries in his ears, and unable to buy the law that goes for justice, must perforce submit to the mercy of the wolf. Is not the memory of Humphrey's orchard still green ?

They might have foreseen, these nobles, if they had but given heed to the voice of conscience, that though their wrong-doing was successful for the time being, it must in the end be followed by the inevitable retribution. They effected their ill-deeds with such apparent impunity that they seemed as secure as the hills. But look how the avenging form of Nemesis is now stalking through the land. Is his hand not upon the unjust holders of the soil? Do we not hear every day and all day long of how the land is going out of cultiva-

tion, and of how the "splendid paupers" are growing poorer and poorer every day? It is a bad look-out for them; but it means future health, happiness and prosperity for the country when they shall be obliged to let the soil go to those who can till it.

It may be objected that this harking back to the things of the past is merely a stirring up of ancient history. The answer is that the life of a nation is a unity, and that the earlier acts of the drama are not ancient history at all. The first is connected in a sequence with the last. Have we it not on divine authority that on God's clocks a thousand years are but as a day? Nothing is truer than that.

This story of the great treachery of the nobles in regard to the land has never yet been fully and properly told—how by every form of "getting" the small holders were dispossessed, till there is hardly a village or township in which the story of Naboth's vineyard has not been repeated from year to year, and from generation to generation, until the land of England is held by from 200,000 to 300,000 owners, or about one in every 146 of the population, while in France there are 7,000,000 landowners, or one in every five of the population.

The process of casting out the peasants had already become so marked in Queen Elizabeth's time, that a law was passed making it illegal for

any peasant's cottage to be left without four acres of land for him to live upon.[1] Then, as now, "the small holdings had been devoured by the large. The labouring peasants had been bundled into villages, where, with no other tenement beyond the rooms which they occupied, they were supported, as now, only by daily or weekly wages; while, through neglect in enforcing the Statute of Labourers, they had been driven to accept such wages as the employers would give, rather than the fair and just equivalent for their work, which it was still the theory of English legislators that they ought to receive."[2]

This condition of things, with a sense of justice which did them honour as men, the statesmen of that day did their best to put an end to by the enactment referred to. Well had it been if those who followed them had had such a feeling of right amongst their possessions. But they had not, or if they had they hid it in a napkin with the proverbial talents, and so the old infamy commenced again. And as the result, we see the descendants of the men who were the making of England, not merely dispossessed of all hold on the land, but gradually rotting away for lack of food and the natural sustainment of men.

One might ask what would become of this

[1] The law was abrogated by 15 Geo. 3, c. 28.

[2] Froude, "History of England."

country if some day it should find itself in a similar predicament to that in which France was cast barely thirty years ago? Then, in the hour of her trial, the peasants to whom the Revolution had done the justice of restoring the land, came to her rescue, and did much towards saving the honour of the country when almost everything else had failed. It was the misfortune of that noble people that for twenty-five years they had been subjected to the will of a poltroon and an assassin. His was the dishonour—his and his marshals' and his advisers'—of the defeat into which it had fallen. When they had done their worst, and the country was at the mercy of the foe, the despised peasant came to the rescue and proved the salvation of the country. What would or could our 200,000 or 300,000 landowners do in such a crisis? Very little, one doubts. It is the poor who make sacrifices, and do deeds of noble trust, not the rich—at least so it would seem.

Nor is the outlook any the more reassuring in case we should be called upon to fight for very life, as we, as a nation, have had to do ere now. Never before was so large a proportion of the people dissociated from the land; never before, perhaps, were those who have to till the soil so impoverished, so little fitted by physical condition to make good fighting material; never before had the people of the country so little hold on the

land. Why, therefore, in case of a European coalition against Great Britain, should the expropriated masses shed their blood for a land in which they are landless? The sentiment of home and country is something. But supposing the half-starved labourers and the brutalised workers were to say as a man, "I am not going to fight for a country in which I have no stake. At worst I can only starve in America as I am doing here!"

Is it not worth the while of the monopolisers of the land to take thought of this? Most assuredly it is an imminent danger. Since the last great war conditions have changed enormously. There was not then a cheap ferry across the Atlantic as now, and other facilitations of democracy. Labour can to-day take advantage of the markets in a way that it could not at the beginning of the century; and as the worker becomes more and more enlightened the more surely will he have the world at command. Whether his capital consists in his physical strength and endurance, or in the acquired craft of his brain and right hand, he will be able to say, "These can win for me bread and a place in any of the four quarters of the globe: why, therefore, should I sentimentalise over a country—and fight for it —in which there is not a single square yard of earth I can grip and say, 'This is my foothold?'"

Would not the labourer especially be justified in saying to his sons and daughters: "Storm-clouds are gathering up, there is going to be trouble, when every man will have to fight for his hearth and his home. But this home, in which I have had to bring you up in poverty and misery, half fed, ill clothed, with hardly enough room for decency, not enough for health—God forgive me, but it is not worth shedding your blood for! Get away, therefore, to America, anywhere, and leave me here. I have only a few years to live, and perhaps it is best that my old bones should rot here—here where they would not give me the decent status of a man!"

Is this picture overdrawn? Let those who have hearts and have seen the labourers in the villages, and how they live, say whether it is or not. In most of their homes it is a case of deficiency of food the year round — a case of deficiency of the very food they are slaving all the time to produce.

Those who have given the subject the most thought are agreed that the smallest amount of food on which a day's work can be healthily done is, for a man, 25 oz., for a woman, 16 oz., for a growing child, 10 oz. In a family of four young children that comes to 81 oz. a day. Let anyone skilled in these matters reckon up what that quantity of food will cost — food of the

simplest kind, such as bread, potatoes, meal, bacon, margarine (for though the labourer may help to produce butter, he is an eater of margarine), etc., and he will find that it varies from 11s. 6d. to 13s. a week. Now, putting the agricultural labourer's wages at the highest rate, namely, 15s. a week, after laying in the food for his family he has some 2s. left for rent, clothes, firing, lights, washing, and all the other etceteras of a household, to say nothing of medical aid for wife and children when needed.

Even if harvest money raises his income to an average of 17s. or 18s. a week the year round, he is still left with barely sufficient to keep body and soul together.

In some counties, like Cambridge, the average does not, according to Major Craigie's "Table of Labourers' Wages," reach so much as 15s. The result is that food is a large want, and the mother, instead of being able to stay at home and do her best for the children, has to go into the field and work for a miserable pittance. In villages within thirty miles of London it is 6s. a week. The result of this degrading toil is seen in ragged and unwashed children, and what is still worse, in children whose hunger is never fully satisfied. Happily for them, poor mites, there are at times wild eggs and unfledged birds for the seeking; and for those who have not

been brought up daintily these make nourishing food. This is no imaginative picture, but sober fact: labourers' children have been known, within an hour's railway run of St Paul's, to fill their famished bellies with unfledged birds, quick from the hedgerow, and other the like live things.

Can one wonder, when life to a large section at the base of society—Christian society, moreover, be it said—is such a martyrdom, that men run to the public-house, to dull their craving and their despair with lunatic broth, thinking it "picks them up," whereas all it does is still further to waste their lowered energies.

This is no dream of a heated fancy, but the actual, disgraceful truth, which these men in their dumb way, and their friends more articulately, are endeavouring to drive into the heads of those who pretend to be Christians—that eighty thousand labourers who extract from English soil the wealth that English landowners spend upon themselves, receive so small a share out of the profits of their toil that they are far worse fed, and therefore far less fitted for their work, than the horses in the ploughs and waggons they drive, that they are, in short, worse cared for than the beasts, and that when society has thus conspired to degrade them, it can, in answer to all remonstrance, only point the finger at them and say, "They deserve no better, they are so

degraded;" forgetting what their wise book says, that "the destruction of the poor is their poverty," which is caused by the iniquitous economical laws that their "betters" have made and still foster and support.

CHAPTER VI

"Woe to him that buildeth a house with blood, that stablish a city by iniquity."

Nor is it in the agricultural districts alone where this baneful deterioration of man is taking place. The forced depopulation of the villages has tended to overcrowd the towns. Those who live by the labour of others, who thrive materially by the keeping up of a servile and always half-starved, and hence degraded class, are by no means loth to see this condition of things continue. It is to their profit to have labour cheap; and so long as they can help it nothing will be done to bring about a better state of society.

This condition, of course, is not peculiar to England. It exists the world over, wherever civilisation obtains. Look anywhere, in every country of Europe—one might almost say of the world, but one prefers to say Europe, because it is so pre-eminently "Christian"—look anywhere, and you will behold want, privation, and numberless other forms of suffering that arise from no temporary or exceptional visitations, but are for ever in our midst—want, privation, and

suffering, with their concomitant physical and moral degradation, so intense and inexcusable, that one of the largest-minded men of our generation expressed the opinion that if there was "no hope of a large improvement of the condition of the greater part of the human family, he should hail the advent of some kindly comet which would sweep the whole affair away as a desirable consummation."

The causes of this state of things are of a permanent character for which we ourselves are solely and entirely responsible. They are to be traced to the anti-christian and unbrotherly relations existing between the two classes into which society is broadly divided—between those on the one hand who, though they do no work, live in luxury and ease, and, on the other hand, those who, without much culture, and too often brutalised by the hard conditions of their existence, habitually suffer from insufficient food and deprivations of every description, but whose deplorable case rarely attracts attention, except it be from some accidental and exceptional poignancy.

If at times we hear little or nothing of the misery of these lives it arises rather from the stolidity with which they endure their lot, from the patient and uncomplaining heroism with which they bear up under their hard fate, than

from any amelioration of their condition. It is not because hunger, cold, and other starving needs have ceased to crush and carry off thousands whose lives are one long story of excessive and unnatural toil; it is because we do not wish to hear of them more than we can help, or because they have become so common to our ears that we cease to think much about them. We read from time to time of the groaning and travailling world at the base of society, but we hasten to forget what we read—we make haste to let the uneasy picture fade from our minds.

"It is no affair of mine," reflects the one who is putting by more and more wealth every year, the produce of the blood and sinews of these martyrs of labour. "It does not concern me," says the cultured non-worker, who, with no physical want unsatisfied, draws for all he has, and depends for his every comfort, upon the labour of the helot of our modern Christian life; to whom, nevertheless, he seldom gives a thought, save when he hears that the slave on whom he lives is being educated too much, or that he is learning to like books—the books that will redeem him yet!

But, poor pampered idle ones, might it not be well now and again to have a thought for your manhood—a thought for your womanhood! It is for you that these martyred ones are sacrificed.

It is for you they work and starve and are brutalised—for you! And, moreover, remember that the richer, the idler, and the more pampered you are, the greater is the burden and the shame of this martyrdom that rests upon you.

Although in all the lower ranks of labour wages are, as a rule, barely enough to keep body and soul together, in certain trades the conditions are such that, not only are wages at starvation rate, but they are fraught also with disease, degradation, and premature death. One need not refer at length to occupations in which poor women try to make a living, but too often find it impossible without eking out their scanty earnings by the dishonourable traffic of their bodies. The condition of the match manufacture, in which so many girls are paid wages that will barely pay for food alone, has often been described in the London papers, and the conditions that obtain in that industry are by no means the worst.

There is hardly a single article of clothing worn by man, woman, or child, but some poor soul at the bottom of the scale has been half sweated to death in the production of it.

The following instance in point was taken from a London paper about a year ago. The article describes a fur-trimmed jacket which has to be made for eightpence. "Each seam has to

be sewn three times; the collar has to be put on; the elaborate braiding has to be formed and attached, and the worker provides her own thread. Each jacket takes some hours to finish, and the magnificent pay is eightpence." The manufacturer acknowledged that this was the fact. Others, he said, with no more work in them, were paid for at the rate of fourteen and sixteenpence, but for this they could not afford more. It was only this line, said the manufacturer, that was so badly paid. He went on to say:—"Actually I do not get more than 8d. on each jacket for myself, after supplying the capital, taking all the risk of bad stock, bad debts, and goodness knows what other risks besides. The profit goes to the middlemen and the shopkeepers. The nearer you get to the source of production the less the profit."

The tale of the middleman was the same. Bad trade, bad debts, remainders going for an old song; shopkeepers wanting unlimited credit, and then heavy discounts. The poor middleman seemed to be in as woeful a plight as any of them. It was the same story with the shopkeeper. High rents, crushing rates, assistants refusing to work more than twelve or thirteen hours a day, and clamouring for a half-holiday every week; lack of customers, wear and tear of stock, and so on, to the dismal tune that

the shopkeeper cannot make a profit whatever he does. Nevertheless, the jacket sells for 15s. or 16s. in the shops, and the stuff costs perhaps 5s., and the worker gets 8d.! Who gets the ten or eleven shillings' profit it is difficult to make out, but one has a suspicion that the middleman takes most of it.

If we turn to the tailoring trade, to the cap making industry, to shoemaking, slipper making, shirt making, we find similar conditions obtaining. Gruesome pictures of the economic slavery appear from time to time in the columns of the newspaper press; but for those who would become fully acquainted with the details of the disgraceful story, there are the cold, passionless pages of the tons of blue-books, the records of innumerable royal commissions and select committees that have been issued during the last thirty years to an expectant world. But they are like Old Testaments, full of words of exposition, monition, of promise, of hope even; but they leave us sorrowful, almost despairing, yearning for the New Testament of emancipation yet to come.

From one book of this stolid British Bible let us take a few extracts. It is known briefly as "The Lord's Committee on Sweating." Our first excerpt shall be one referring to "sweatery" in the tailoring trade in Glasgow. We read that there, ten years ago—and for anything we

know the conditions are the same to-day—a woman got 2s. for making a boy's kilt suit which would take her sixteen or seventeen hours to make. Shooting coats were made at from 2s. to 2s. 3d.; overcoats at from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 3d; trousers from 11s. to 14s. a dozen.

Of some sweaters' places it is written: "The sweater makes a practice of what we call 'taking on learners'; that is to say, employs young girls for a certain time to learn the machine part of the work, and they get no wages for six weeks or two months, and after that time, if competent, they get 2s. or 3s. a week, and after the busy season is over, as a rule they discharge them all and take on a new batch. The new learners are again got for nothing, and the same thing takes place as before." Nor is it in the Glasgow tailoring trade alone that this method of sweating "learners" prevails.

In the London tailoring trade the same sort of thing takes place. One workman says: "Sometimes we have nothing to do for weeks and weeks, but have to go idle, and the wages (when there is work) are not paid regularly. One sweater pays on Friday, one pays on Saturday, one pays on Sunday, and one pays nothing: you have to summon him for it." Mr Burnett, labour correspondent of the Board of Trade, gives evidence to the effect that some

women are paid as low as 6d. a day. "For a slop coat, from 2s. to 3s. 9d. was formerly paid; the rate is now 1s. 6d. to 2s. 3d. A good coat, for which a man got 10s. 2d. a few years ago, now brings to the maker only 6s. 6d." He cites establishments "where cloaks are now made for 4s. 6d., which six or seven years ago were paid for at the rate of 8s. Witney coats, which were then made for 10s. 3d., are now made for 5s. 6d."

Nor is this the worst, "A woman makes a vest outright for 5d., and she is able to make four a day"—a total of 1s. 8d. Mr Arnold White produced a coat which was made for 7½d., and by working fifteen hours a woman could make four such in a day, earning 2s. 6d.; but out of that she had to pay 7d. for trimming and other etceteras.

It is fifty years since Hood sang his "Song of the Shirt," which has brought the pitiful tears to thousands of eyes; and yet the needful garment is made now as then—

"In poverty, hunger and dirt."

The only difference is that, whereas then it was all "stitch, stitch, stitch," plying the needle and thread, now the work is done by machine. But though the machine does the work quicker, the toiler's martyrdom is still the same. Sevenpence

and eightpence a dozen is (or was in 1888) the price paid for shirtmaking. One woman could earn 1s. 2d. a day at the work; but her materials cost her 1s. 3d. a week besides the cost of the sewing machine, for which she had to pay £7, 3s. in instalments of 2s. 6d. a week. She began work between seven and eight o'clock in the morning and did not leave off sometimes till eleven at night.

Another woman had to "sit up until twelve and one o'clock at night to do a dozen and a half." A third witness confessed that though "toiling like this, she did not average 6d. a day to buy food for herself and children after her rent was paid."

The Rev. W. Adamson, rector of Old Ford, gives evidence to the effect that some of the best silk mantles sold in the West End shops were made in his parish for 7½d. each, this being the price paid "for making the whole mantle right throughout; and they have to find their own cotton and silk, and oil for the machine." The sweater, however, only pays 5d. to the worker, and the latter can make 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. a day.

The same witness avers that "fifteen hours' work in the day at boot-making is not exceptional;" and Dr Adler, the Delegate Chief Rabbi, says that eighteen hours is regarded as

an ordinary day in the cheap-boot trade. A Mr Hoffman testifies to having found children at work at boot-finishing up to twelve and one o'clock at night. He had also seen beds in cellars and underground places where boot work was carried on, and knew of a double room knocked into one where ten men and also a man and his wife and six children worked and slept. There were "greeners"—persons who had not learned the trade properly—"many of whom will live on a cup of coffee and a red herring for a whole day."

These statements refer to London, exceptional in many respects, in its size for one thing, and in the ease with which things may exist and be hidden; but the same or similar conditions exist in all large towns. We have seen something of what is done in Glasgow in the tailoring trade; in Leeds, in the slipper-making industry, mostly now in the hands of Jews, the story is much the same. Mr Sherard, in his "White Slaves of England," gives a gruesome, though by no means too dark a picture of what its toilers have to endure, working as they do, fourteen or more hours a day for a remuneration of fourpence an hour. But it is needless to follow the writer through his exposure of these abominations, or of the miseries of the tailors and tailoresses in the notorious Leyland, struggling with

filthily-woven and manure-sized cloth, or sewing for dear life amidst awful stenches and general uncleanliness, the girls earning in their "punishing-houses" at most no more than half-a-sovereign a week, and having to pay out of that a sixth in "sewings," besides being obliged to submit to bullying foremen, iniquitous fines, constant slackness of work, and frequent reductions of wages.

For much of this Mr Sherard quotes Miss Ford of Adel Grange, an unimpeachable authority; while for his harrowing description of the misery of the wool-combers of Bradford he has the corroborative testimony of Mr Samuel Shaftoe, J.P., Secretary of the Local Wool-Combers' Association. The pictures he draws of this industry are like a nightmare. He compares the men working in the night shifts in the combing-sheds to skeletons, and declares that the work so preys on their physique as to make their weight two or three stones less than that of the average adult. Their wages he estimates at perhaps a sovereign weekly, but as they might be idle nearly half the year, the total on which a whole family has to be supported has to be halved. The conditions of work are frightful also, a foul yellow dust pervading the atmosphere, a filthy smell coming often from the fleeces, and the heat proving so infernal as to neces-

sitate the removal of most of the workers' clothes.

As a finishing touch to this grim picture, it need only be added that often enough man and wife are wholly separated, the one working on the night turn, the other in the day, and just seeing each other perhaps for an instant as one passes into and the other out of the Gehenna of toil.

One might go on adding to the list of these malebolgi of labour almost *ad infinitum*, referring to the long hours and unwholesome conditions of labour in the fish-curing trade; to the insalubrity of some of the departments of the Belfast linen industry; to the terrible nature of work in our coal mines, wherein men barter their lives for a bare existence wage to provide those with a luxurious income, cruelly won, who have no more natural right to the produce of the earth's entrails than they have to the stars. But in almost every department of labour we witness the same sort of thing.

One sickens of the inhumanity at the root of all this slavery. It fills the soul with a feeling akin to despair to think that in this England of ours, blessed in some things above most countries, there can be found men and women who are content to live on the flesh and blood, yea, upon the very soul's health, of the workers. For, be it remem-

bered, in the end, the holding of men and women and children in slavery by the grip of their hunger, means nothing less than the crushing out of the very souls of many of them—killing that central spark, which is the man, the woman.

CHAPTER VII

"Also in thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents."

But even yet we have not come to the blackest of the picture. It is not until we reach the alkali and white-lead workers, to the nail-makers of Broomsgrove, or the chain-makers of Cradley Heath, that we touch the lowest depths of labour degradation and torture—unless, indeed, there be a still deeper depth to be found in the stoke-holds of ships.

It would be a work of supererogation to go over the whole catalogue of infamies connected with the alkali and white-lead industries, or to tell again the dismal story of the nail and chain makers. Have they not been set forth—for perhaps the hundredth time—in the book of the "White Slaves?" And yet one cannot pass them over entirely, so deeply are they responsible for a large share in the martyrology of toil in this nineteenth century of grace.

A few brief indications, however, must suffice. And—to take the case of the alkali workers first—let anyone who doubts go to Widnes or St Helen's and see for himself what this terrible industry does

for human life, as for vegetation. To look at town and country, one would imagine that a curse had fallen upon both. And such indeed is the case! Hardly a green tree, a bush, or a blade of grass is to be seen for miles round. All have been killed by the sulphuretted hydrogen and other gases which, "belched forth night and day from the many factories, rot the clothes, the teeth, and in the end the bodies of the workers," so that "it is rare to find old people amongst the alkali workers."[1]

A leading doctor of St Helen's told Mr Sherard that this alkali business is a miserably unhealthy one, adding, "if the published statistics show but a small death-rate it is because the chemical trade only kills a man three parts out of four, leaving the workhouse to do the rest. The men are dismissed before they are actually dying. As a general rule the men go from forty-five to fifty-five years of age. The tubes become blocked up and asthmatical, the gases destroy all elasticity of the tubes. The lime men get soft stone. All get more or less anæmic. Asthma, kidney disease, chronic cystitis are the perquisites of many."

In all such cases where men are obliged to play chuck-farthing with death, degradation is only too often the result. As in so many other departments of labour-slavery, drink is resorted

[1] The "White Slaves of England," by Robert Sherard.

to; it acts as a spur for the time being, and in the end becomes the besetting sin. "The men cannot do their work unless they are half-drunk," says the above-mentioned medical authority: "They drink because they cannot eat. A man cannot be healthy under these conditions."

Lumbago, gastralgia, bronchitis, and lung diseases generally are among some of the scourges that carry off the alkali workers before their time. But bad as is the hydrochloric acid and the heat of the furnaces to which the men are exposed—heat on one side and draught on the other—"Roger" is worse.

Roger is the chlorine gas which, pumped on to slaked lime, transforms this into bleaching powder. "Roger . . . is so poisonous that the men . . . who pack the bleaching powder after the process into the barrels in which it is exported work with goggles on their eyes and twenty thicknesses of flannel over their mouths, these muzzles being tightly secured by long cords. They can pack but a few minutes at a time. A 'feed' of this gas kills its man in an hour."[1] Yet lethal as are its effects, the men are full of grim jokes about 'Roger.'"

One would think that at least these men would be well paid. But no; though they put soul as well as body into the scale they must perforce

[1] "White Slaves," p. 55.

kick the beam for a starvation wage. First degrade your man and then underpay him is the high politico-economical maxim of the exploiters of labour to-day. Twenty-four shillings a week seems to be considered a good wage for these men, who go with death in their hands every day of their lives, and even that they can only earn by sacrificing their Sunday. Some average only 3s. 9d. a day; while the used-up man, at the last stage before the workhouse—"toothless, asthmatic, half-blind," who are employed breaking the stones from which sulphur is extracted, may, if he be extra smart, "earn 13s. a week, but few earn more than 8s. a week."[1] Nor can they depend on this munificent hire with anything like regularity. "Of 'Roger,'" says Mr Sherard, "and salt-cake gas, and the hundred other risks that attend them, they speak light-heartedly:" their only grief is the irregularity of their death-dealing occupation.

For grim ghastliness there is nothing to choose between the alkali industry in South Lancashire and the white-lead industry of Newcastle-on-Tyne. Everyone who knows anything is aware of the poisonous nature of white-lead, and of the heavy demands it makes upon the worker for victims. It is needless to go into details of the

[1] "White Slaves."

manufacture, suffice it to say that it is one of the deadliest, and that it can only be carried on at the cost of untold suffering, insanity, and death. One of the first effects of the white-lead poison is to cause colic, cramp, and inflammation of the bowels, on which quickly follow paralysis and death. One of its peculiar effects is what is known as "wrist-drop." The lead gets under the nails, and so affects the joints that the arms become twisted. Mr Sherard gives an instance of a man suffering from wrist-drop. "He could only lift his arms with the hands hanging down, and to raise a glass to his mouth had to press it between the backs of his wrists. He has to eat like an animal, with his mouth to his plate. He is completely helpless at the age of thirty-nine."

This poor fellow had worked at his lethal calling for a little over seven years, earning about 23s. a week.

But, bad as is the case of the men, that of the women is, or was, still worse; for, happily, the Home Secretary a few months ago issued an order prohibiting the employment of women in the white-lead works, as well as making more stringent regulations for the protection of the men. Women and girls, however, are still allowed to work in potteries and other manufactories in which white-lead is employed, and in

which we hear from time to time of their losing sight or being otherwise maimed through its poisonous effects.

The *Staffordshire Sentinel* recently gave particulars of five cases of young people of 16, 17, and 18, blinded by the conditions under which raw lead is used in the potteries. Here is an example, characteristic of the rest :—

"Gertrude Cartledge was employed for eighteen months in the dusting shop—where colour and glaze are 'dusted' on the ware, very dangerous work. At the end of 1896 she had a fit when on the way home. She became very ill, suffering terribly from pains in the head, and there were symptoms of paralysis. One Sunday morning, on coming downstairs, she said to her father, 'Dada, it's dark; is it going to rain?' 'No,' replied her father, '*it's a nice morning, and the sun is shining.*' The poor girl had lost her sight, and she has never seen since."

Professor Thomas Oliver, an expert in regard to the effects of white-lead, and who holds that women are physically more liable to lead poisoning than men, says that every now and then a girl of eighteen to twenty-three years of age works only a few weeks or months in a lead factory, when symptoms of lead-poisoning are noticed, namely—colic, constipation, vomiting, headache, pains in the limbs, and incomplete

blindness. In a few days, with or without treatment, she becomes convulsed, and dies in a state of coma, the death being so sudden that we cannot but regard it as due to acute toxæmia. "Death in these cases is analogous to strychnine poisoning."

The consequences of lead-poisoning are much more serious in the case of women than in the case of men. According to Professor Oliver the women employed in the lead factories almost invariably miscarry. "I have known cases," he says, "of women who have had children naturally before going to the lead-works, but, whilst employed in the works, either had nothing but miscarriages or gave birth to still-born children." Nor does it appear that, when born alive, they are as healthy as they should be. And yet, for all this misery and suffering, if we may believe Mr Sherard, these women do not average the year round more than 7s. a week.

God help the poor labouring mother! In her purest joy she must find little else but suffering. If she is a true-hearted woman she must be sorry even when a man-child is born to her, knowing the slavery he will have to go through for a livelihood, but should it be a girl—pity on her, she must be ready to cry out with Job that it had been better if her travail had resulted in an

untimely birth. And yet when it is a question of indemnifying these people for the maiming and suffering caused by improper conditions or negligence, we find a Christian legislature, and especially Christian "lords," setting their unfeeling heels upon it.

We do not in these days believe in the "curse" of labour, but rather in the curse of idleness. But wherever lies the blame, there is assuredly something accursed in those industries the workers in which are martyred daily between the upper and nether millstones of slavish and degrading toil. In a "Tale of Eternity" which the writer once read, the wanderer asks to be allowed a sight of Hell. Instantly he is wafted back from the extra-terrestrial regions into which he had been transported, and is landed—where think you? In any subterranean or subaqueous Hades? No, but at chain-making, Cradley Heath. And why Cradley Heath? Because all the veritable hells are created by man, not by the libelled and defamed Almighty.

Look at the way men—and women—work and live in this Malebolge of Cradley Heath, and say what worse Inferno could you wish to send your worst enemy to.

The work of chain-making consists in heating iron rods (a process which involves a number of pulls on the bellows for each link), bending the

red-hot piece, cutting it on the anvil, or "hardy," twisting the link, inserting it into the last link of the chain, and welding or closing it with repeated blows of the hand-hammer and the "oliver," worked by a treadle. Of this industry and the allied one of nail-making, carried on at Bromsgrove, the Report of the Lords' Sweating Committee says that, "Although these industries do not give employment to a great number of persons, in scarcely any that have come under our notice is so much poverty to be found, combined with such severe work and so many hardships."

"The larger description of chains," continues the Report, "known as cable-chains, are made in factories; block chains, cart-horse back bands, dog chains, and other smaller kinds, are made in the district in small shops attached to the homes of the workers. In most cases there is a workshop at the back of the house, fitted up with an anvil, a stone block, and other appliances." A shop of the kind described, with a dwelling-house attached, lets at from 3s. to 3s. 6d. a week.

The sweater in these trades is known as the "fogger." He goes to the master, takes out the work, and distributes it among the men and women workers. When it is done he takes it back to the master. Not only are the workers sweated to the bone by these middlemen, but often enough—according to the evidence given—

they are shamefully defrauded by the fogger's use of fraudulent scales.

It was shown that a hard week's work on common chain, averaging twelve hours a day for five days out of the week, provides no more than a bare subsistence for the men or women engaged in it. The Rev. R. H. Rylett, a minister of Dudley, acquainted with the district, stated that the women working on the smaller chains get from 4s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. a week. A man can make about three cwt. of chain a week, for which he receives 5s. per cwt.; so that he would earn about 15s.

Some skilled workmen can earn as much as 10s. a day; but the work is so exhausting that, having worked enough hours to earn that amount, a man would be so done up that he would have to "play" for the next day or two. Men seldom, in fact, earn more than a pound a week, when charges for "gleeds" or firing have been deducted.

One workwoman told their lordships that she could usually earn 5s. a week, or something like that, out of which she had to pay 1s. for firing. Another stated that, working from seven in the morning till seven at night, she could make about a hundredweight of chain in a week, for which she was paid from 4s. to 6s. 6d., the price varying. "We do not live very well," said this

woman; "our most living is bacon. We get a bit of butter sometimes."

A girl, aged fifteen, said she did not get as much to eat as she would like, even of bread and potatoes, and Mr Ker, certifying surgeon for the Halesowen district, affirmed that "children do not get enough to eat, even of the poorest food," while the factory inspector said that two years ago the people were near starving.

Another girl, aged fourteen years and nine months, who helped to cut nails, began to work when she was thirteen, worked from seven in the morning till seven at night, and was not strong enough for the work. One witness said that children used to begin work at eight; now they begin at twelve or thirteen. Mr W. Price, who himself commenced work at nine, said that children now begin to work at eleven and twelve, and that the Education Act, forbidding children under thirteen to work for more than half-time, is evaded. A girl of eighteen stated that she worked twelve hours a day, and that her net earnings would be about 7s. 1d. for the week. Sometimes she had bacon for her dinner, never fresh meat.

"Chronic hunger is the experience of most of the women workers of Cradley Heath," says Mr Sherard. "'We have to do with two quartern loaves a day,' said one of the women blacksmiths

to me, 'though three such wouldn't be too much for us.' This woman had six children to keep, and her husband into the bargain, for he had been out of work since Christmas. She was good enough to detail to me her manner of living. A pennyworth of bits of bacon, two pennyworth of meat from the 'chep-butcher,' and a pennyworth of potatoes, all cooked together, made a dinner for the family of eight." [1]

Such a dinner, however, was not always to be had. Often enough she and the rest of them had to be content with dripping "as a relish to insufficient bread;" sop—hot water and bread—was a dainty for the children; in good weeks she could get a bit of margarine—that last triumph of civilisation!

By working incessantly some twelve hours a day this woman could earn about 8s. a week; that is, she could make about one hundredweight and a half of heavy chain a week, at 5s. 4d. the cwt. But this is wealth in comparison with the earnings of another female Vulcan who makes chain-harrows, and at the end of the week, after working twelve hours a day, carries home 5s. In three days a sister slave forged 728 heavy links, and for this work received 2s. 2d., out of which sum she paid 7½d. for the necessary firing for her work and 1s. to a

[1] "White Slaves."

nurse for taking care of her baby; so that her net earnings for the thirty-six hours was 6½d.[1]

What wonder if some of these women have to make a half-pennyworth of oatmeal serve for a whole family. One woman, who does this often, works "from three in the morning till eleven at night, and begins again at three in the morning," in order to feed her five children, their father being in an asylum for the insane. "Heat, worry, and drink knocked my old un'," explains the wife. Drink plays its usual rôle amongst these people, whose low vitality is always craving a stimulus.

The indefeasible brutality at the bottom of all this slavery is the more apparent when, as the Report of the Sweating Committee says, it is mentioned that the price of a dog chain, which is made by these women for three farthings, is, in London, from 1s. to 1s. 3d. The value of the materials would be about 2d. A still more extraordinary case is that mentioned by Mr Juggings, who stated that cart chains, costing, as far as value of labour and material were concerned, 1½d. and 7d. respectively, had sold in Southport for from 4s. 6d. to 5s., in Liverpool for 5s., and in London for 7s.

Not a whit less miserable are the lives of the Bromsgrove nail-makers than those of their

[1] "White Slaves."

brethren of Cradley Heath. Bromsgrove, a pretty little town in the Midlands, is full of homes that are always overshadowed by the phantom of starvation. God-fearing and resigned heroes and heroines are many of these makers of nails, who, because they cannot get out of the clutches of the "fogger," must perforce drag out a weary existence upon a few shillings a week.

"There are scores of men in this parish," said a former secretary of the one-time Nailmakers' Union, "who are not earning 9s. a week for seventy, eighty, and ninety hours' work, and out of these earnings have to pay from 1s. to 1s. 6d. a week for firing, and about 6d. for keeping their tools in order." [1]

A nailmaker told the Sweating Committee that out of his week's work only about 8s. 6d. remained for himself, after deducting firing and other charges; "and I have worked for that amount of money," he added, "till I did not know where to put myself."

In another case a husband and wife work together. The man does the "heading," the woman the "pointing" of the nails. Their united labour brings in from 18s. to 21s. a week, but of that about 2s. 3d. goes for "breeze" (*i.e.* fuel), about 5s. for carriage, 2s. 6d. for rent of

[1] "White Slaves."

house and shop, 6d. to 9d. for deductions on account of under-weight, and the man has to devote from half a day to a day to repairing his tools. Nor does 18s. or 20s. represent their average weekly earnings over a year, as some weeks they do not get any work at all. Their general hours of work were from seven in the morning till nine at night, with half an hour for breakfast, an hour for dinner, and half an hour for tea for the man. The woman had no regular time for meals, "on account of there being no one in the house to do the work besides myself."

According to Mr Rylett, already quoted, it is not unusual for these people to work thirteen or fourteen hours a day. "It is common," he said, "to find these people working up to eight and nine o'clock at night." One witness "could mention scores of instances of working sixty and sixty-five hours a week."

According to Mr Sherard, a nailmaker has to fashion 220 tacks for 1d., or 24,000 for 9s. 1d. A nailer, his wife and five children, could only earn 15s. amongst them, and 4s. of that amount had to go for rent and fire. A man making clout nails could earn 7s. (for 30 lb.); his wife, working nine hours a day making tacks, at 6d. the 1000, could earn about 1s. a day. "My old man," said the woman, "has told you the

outside farthing that he earns. His average is 6s. 3d. a week, and when Saturday comes it is hard to lay out. I have to turn it over very often. And my man is the hardest working man in Bromsgrove, and has never been on the beer in his life." [1]

Out of their joint income 2s. 6d. went for rent, 1s. for repair of tools, and 1s. 1d. for fuel. "Tea, bread, and margarine were their staple food," sixpence worth of meat being thrown in by way of Sunday treat. New clothes were a thing not to be thought of. "I has been married twenty-three years," said the woman, "and I has never had a new dress since I was married."

According to some witnesses examined before the Sweating Committee, work is at times carried on in these trades in conditions that lead to indecency and immorality. As regards the charge of indecency in regard to dress, one of the inspectors demurred, saying, "You may certainly see far more indecency in the stalls of a London theatre than you may see in a chain and nail shop in the way of clothing." Nor is the charge of immorality borne out by the statistics of illegitimacy. It is a common thing, however, "for girls and boys to marry at fifteen and sixteen, and bring on themselves the charge

[1] "White Slaves."

of a family when in a state not far removed from starvation."[1]

Need it surprise anyone, after reading these things, to hear that "the race had deteriorated in the last ten years."[2] When all is said and done, the most valuable asset of a nation is a physically strong and morally efficient people; and yet we calmly, and with apparent indifference, stand by and see that asset being gradually destroyed by the canker of gold-lust and greed, because at the root of the matter that is the real cause of all slavish labour and starvation.

Can one wonder that amid such grinding poverty and deprivation as are to be seen on every hand, such excessive and unnatural toil, the "chronic condition of tens of thousands of the poor" is one "of a ceaseless and almost unvarying depression"; and that the result of this "heritage of generations of overwork and underpay" is a gradual debasing of the limit of human life until, though the image and superscription remain legible, its noblest and most enduring qualities have disappeared? These conditions are such that they tend to perpetuate themselves. There is no recuperative power left; the vampire "Have" has sucked so fiercely at the veins of

[1] Report of the Sweating Committee.
Report of the Lords' Sweating Committee.

the "Have-nots" that all vital resiliency has gone.

There is a poverty that is honourable, that begets strength and greatness; but it is a very different thing from the poverty that is ever on the under-side of want, that never knows what sufficiency is, that is worse, indeed, than death. For death is "but a sleep and a forgetting;" whereas this "poverty of work, of wages, of comfort, of resource, of opportunity, of character, of life,"[1] means annihilation — a gradual dying away of all force, of all energy, of all thought, of all hope, of very soul.

It is a condition that is ever preying upon itself, and being preyed upon. Like a soil that has been worked for generations, without anything being given back to it for what it yields, these "cities of the poorest of the poor" have become thoroughly exhausted, almost beyond all hope of self-recovery. It is in this condition—in the inefficiency of the workers, early marriages, and the tendency of the residuum of the population in large towns to form a helpless community, together with a low standard of life, that the Report of the Sweating Committee finds the chief "factors in producing sweating." True: but what about the other factors?

[1] The Rev. G. S. Reaney in "The Destitute Alien."

CHAPTER VIII

"I will make a man more precious than fine gold."

I HAVE said that a workman must die before his time in order that the rich may live in idleness and luxury. That may appear a hard saying, but it is literally true. The average of the life of a worker, apart from agriculture, is about thirty-three years, more than twenty years less than the general average for Great Britain. At the bottom of the scale stands the toiler, at the top the clergyman; on the one hand, the man who works the hardest and lives the poorest, whose life is too often one of want and care from the cradle to the grave; on the other, the gentleman, who takes upon himself the mantle of the Man of Sorrows, and undertakes to carry his message to the sorrowful. His life is easy, he is well fed, well-housed, well clad; he sees as little of the dark and seamy side of things as possible; he swims down the stream of life with the least trouble and care of any, save perhaps the self-indulgent rich, and dies—he dies with the largest average accumulation of years upon his head of any class or calling. He is the slowest to take his departure to that

heaven of bliss, which it has been his life's duty to recommend to others.

The only class of toilers who compare favourably with the clergy are the agricultural labourers. Thanks to their life in the open air and the exercise that tends to keep the bodily functions in order, labourers in agricultural districts enjoy the highest average of life of any workers. Dr Tatham (in the Supplement to the Fifty-fifth Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England, Part II.) shows that, whereas agricultural labourers die at a rate which he takes as 100, the proportion for the London general labourer is 212, and for the labourer in industrial districts, 227. The proportion of dock labourers' deaths is nearly three times that of agriculturalists. The file-maker, the potter, and the lead-worker vie with the dock labourer in the speed with which they make acquaintance with death. In the "dusty" trades, for every 100 deaths of agriculturalists from phthisis and respiratory complaints, there die from the same causes 244 cotton operatives, 261 quarrymen, 292 iron and steel workers, 335 glass workers, 373 file-makers, 407 cutlers, 453 potters.

These mortality figures of 1891 are in a large number of cases worse than those given by Dr Ogle ten years before. The death-rate of potters

is shown to be practically the same as in 1871; deaths from lead-poisoning had increased to twice the rate of 1881.

The other principal trades which show a heavier mortality than twenty years ago are the dyers and printers, and the glass-makers. The following extract from the comparative mortality figures will show the ravages caused in these industries by phthisis and respiratory diseases alone. The figures for the clergy are given as a standard of comparison :—

Clergy	136
Dyers and printers . .	624
Glass-makers . . .	740
File-makers . . .	825
Potters. . . .	1001
Clergy (from all causes) .	533

It is, unfortunately, but too true that not only are the normal conditions of the workers' toil such as, in a large proportion of cases, to promote disease and shorten life, but amongst employers there is too often a callous indifference to such general precautions as would put an end to a large proportion of preventable accidents and disease. And not only this, but up to the present the classes who live upon the labour of the workers have stood stolidly in the way of such proposed parliamentary enactments as

would tend to the protection of life and health. Such measures, if carried out, would result—so they think—in a reduction of their profits; and so they are content to take an extra percentage made possible by negligence and indifference to the lives of those they employ, and to the happiness and well-being of others dependent upon them for their bread. This has been abundantly shown by what has gone before.

But this is not all, nor even the worst. There are actually men who, for their profit, plan murder. Mr Plimsol was the first to awaken England to the enormity of the system which sent ships to sea designed and registered for destruction. Companies were formed whose sole object was thus to consign boats and cargoes to the depths of ocean, so that they might benefit financially by the over-insurance. It was nothing to these men—human devils as they were—that a dozen or two men might go to the bottom with them. That was a part of the game; for dead men could tell no tales. What was it to them if whole families were thus cast into the most heartrending distress and misery? What if wives were left destitute and children without bread, so long as they secured their ungodly gains?

There are, doubtless, good people who will say that such things could not be; men might insure

their ships and cargoes against loss, but that they could not be so diabolically wicked as calmly and deliberately to plan disaster and death for gain. Possibly some of those who held shares in such companies were innocent of any guilty knowledge, but that cannot be said of all. Two men were known to the writer, both of whom were shareholders in companies of the kind. Both of them, too, acknowledged that money had flowed into their coffers from this criminal source. One became a rich man by such means, and for years sat in Parliament for a Radical constituency. Where he is now one does not care to inquire. The other murderer has gone whither he will more clearly see by how base a bargain he sought to enhance his enjoyment of this shuttle's-length of a life. It is not unlikely that before he left he began to have painful intimations of that fact from the profound abysses of consciousness below and beyond life on every side.

Owing to the fierce light that was a few years ago turned upon these practices, not nearly so much of this sort of thing takes place to-day as formerly, though there is still far too much. But so rampant and inconsistent is the commercialism of the age, and so eager the race for wealth, that the unfeeling brutality of the human animal, unchecked by altruistic sentiments, if

foiled of its purpose in one direction, soon finds an outlet in another. Hence such conditions of labour as are shown in the following picture, which for its unrelieved grimness and gloom would have suited well for a canto in Dante's "Inferno." Dante's poem, however, was an imagination; this is a bit of nineteenth-century realism. It is culled from the newspaper—that brimming record of our seamy and parti-coloured civilisation—and is no overdrawn description of the conditions in which stokers and firemen live on board ocean-steamships—conditions which drive an abnormal number of the poor fellows to suicide.

The writer begins by saying that his interest in the subject dates from a previous voyage, when the chief engineer took him down to see the working of the vessel. "We stood," he proceeds, "as near as we could to the door of the furnace-room, beaten back by the intolerable heat if we ventured from under the air funnel. Here, in front of the row of huge furnaces, stood the firemen, stripped almost naked, perspiration streaming down their blackened bodies, never ceasing in their work of opening and re-opening the furnace doors to shovel in fresh supplies of coal and keep the fire raked up to a white heat. Under those conditions the men worked four hours on and four off at

stoking, but, in addition to that, they had to remove their own ashes, which took another hour. This chief engineer himself thought their hours too long, and the food provided for them very poor, and he did not think it any wonder that once ashore their instinct was to lie still and drink whisky. As a man of heart he pitied them, and said so, but what could he do?

"Aboard the far larger liner I have just left, I had considerable talk with a fireman, who was in a state of weakness and exhaustion brought about by the heat and strain. Of the eighty men who stoked this vessel, he believed every one drank save himself, not only ashore but afloat, for, though against the rules, each smuggled whisky bottles in his satchel. The stench of the whisky, combined with the intense heat, turned him sick every time he descended the ladder. They worked four hours on, then eight off; then four on and four off, and oatmeal water was provided for drink during their work. The food prepared for them he could not eat; he said it was not fit for men, and he had lost 20 lb. in a month. . . . Then pointing to the coarse rope-netting drawn tightly down in front of the narrow steerage deck, he said, 'Do you know what that's for? That's to keep firemen from jumping overboard; we get light-headed with heat and weakness."

That this is no fancy picture anyone who has been much on board ocean-steamships and has conversed with engineers can avouch, even if the investigations of the Board of Trade were not sufficient to place the facts beyond question. According to the inquiries of that department, the mortality that obtains amongst the slaves of the stoke-hold is something enormous, being not less than 65 per cent.

No doubt many of the men who hire themselves out as firemen and stokers are of a low type, and undoubtedly a large number of them drink. It would be surprising if they did not. Is not the whole of our literature, as well as our social customs, saturated with the praise of drink, and is it not given conditions of sale and dissemination eclipsing anything else, whether we regard food for the body or food for the mind? And nothing that is taken into the body, or that is put upon the body, is subject to so much insidious and deleterious adulteration as this liquid damnation. If it were the peculiar and invincible vehicle of salvation itself it could not be given such scope and license. And when such is the case, what are these men that they should be able to judge it for what it is, and pass it by as a fraudulent thing?

True, they are free agents, and to a large extent responsible for their actions. But society

is also responsible. That is the fact that it is still necessary to bring home to the consciences of English men and English women, that in all these conditions of degrading, unwholesome, and demoralising labour, in all the preventable death, sickness, and hurt that takes place in our works and in our mills and factories (to say nothing of what is caused by the insanitary condition of manufacturing towns), they have a responsible part and share.

But few are they, unfortunately, who take the trouble so much as to know the nature and extent of labour's martyrology—even amongst those who are chiefly contributing thereto. If they were compelled—as one sometimes thinks they should be—to live amid the conditions which their wealth-production has created, they would be soon greatly ameliorated, if not entirely removed.

Nevertheless, let us look at the facts. During the last fifty years industry and labour have sent more persons to their graves, to hospitals, to beds of suffering, than any war that has taken place during the same period.

According to a return issued on the motion of Sir William Plowden in 1890, there were 2070 deaths and 22,467 injuries in connection with labour. If we add 2000 for shipping, we have a total of 26,537 deaths and injuries. From evidence given before the Labour Commission, we

learn that, in spite of what factory inspectors say, the death-rate in many trades has risen ; and from the Hearts of Oak Society we know that in one year they had 10,094 cases of accident, involving 72 deaths. If that average is maintained through the whole 8,000,000 of workers, it means that in one year there were 500,000 which ought to have been reported. The London Hospital deals in one year with some 36,000 accidents, and at the Poplar Hospital, situated so near as it is to the slaughter-houses, accidents are admitted at the rate of three per hour per day. In the docks the amount of suffering and death through accident is immense, and if the new Act were properly enforced, 60 per cent. of the accidents now received at the London Hospital might be prevented in twelve months. In the mill-sawyers' trade, 397 men out of 2900, or 10 per cent., were away from work for twenty-six weeks in one year through accidents. In the brickmakers' 8 per cent., and in the steel-workers' 7 per cent., were away for the same period from similar causes.

In a lecture he delivered in the Music Hall, Battersea, in the month of November, 1893, Mr John Burns, M.P., stated, that in thirty years 31,466 miners had been killed outright, which gave an average of 1000 per annum ; whilst over 120,000 were injured every year. Was it to be wondered at, he asked, that they demanded

legislative interference? In South Wales 280 out of every 1000 miners met with accidents every year, and in Cleveland 1 out of 8 was away from work three and a half weeks in the year through accident. As an argument in favour of legislation, Mr Burns said it had been shown in the case of sailors, that whereas in 1882 1 out of 59 was lost through accident or from other causes, the proportion had decreased in 1889 to 1 in 126.

Take another laborious class of men, those engaged on the railways. In the eighteen years from 1874 to 1893, 12,000 were killed, and 160,000 injured on the railway lines of the country. In seven years 1220 out of the 14,000 shunters and brakesmen employed on the railways of the United Kingdom were killed, and 11,690 injured, which means that something like 80 per cent. of the workers thus employed may calculate upon being either killed or maimed in seven years. In 1892 1 in 164 shunters was killed, and 1 in 16 injured.

In the year 1894 the number of deaths attributable to "accident" was reported as 4699, while in 1895 the total was 4493. But, on the other hand, 26,846 were reported as injured, against 23,863 in 1894. Of the 1895 list, 10,011 were injured in factories and workshops, 5470 in and about mines, and 7480 among railway servants.

These are but a few facts and figures selected from a number relating to trades and occupations that are not dangerous to life in the same sense as the alkali and white-lead industries, and in which the great loss of life and frequent maiming are largely preventable. Yet it will be remembered that when it was proposed to make employers liable for injuries done to their employés, how those who live by the men, who get rich on their labour, united together to prevent a just and righteous act from being passed.

It is a strange satire on our religious pretensions. And the satire becomes the sharper the deeper one investigates the facts, and sees that the men who should be the closest friends of the workers are the very ones who can be the least depended upon. In any struggle engaged in by the workers for the bettering of their condition, the clergy, for the most part, stand aside, even if they do not openly join the militant ranks against them. They hold apparently that they were sent to comfort the rich and rebuke the poor—to preach contentment to the miserly-paid worker, though contentment with such a lot as theirs would be almost worse than crime.

As a class these men have ever been opposed to the workers in their struggles to ameliorate their condition. If there have been a few with them—and, thank Heaven, there has always

been a noble sprinkling!—they have been of the poorer clergy, men whose needs have allied them with the down-trodden in other walks of life. The higher in the scale, the surer is their divinity to be on the side of the gilded legions. Who that have watched the fight of labour against capital, of capital against labour, but have been compelled to blush for these sons of the church, and especially for the highest among them. Is there a man or woman who, with a spark of sympathy for the toiler, has taken record of the doings of the House of Lords but has felt the thrill of indignation at the action of these "my lords" of the church. Always, almost to a man, against conditions that would make for wholesomeness of life and purity of morals amongst the poor. Always on the side of him who carries the bag with the thirty pieces of silver, the price of betrayal. But why use the flail on the trodden straw? Has not the treachery of the "lords spiritual" became a bye-word? "Blind mouths."

As the greater fish, so the smaller fry. Who does not remember the Jerusalem Chamber conference—what time the miners of Lancashire, Derbyshire, and adjacent counties were fighting for a "living wage"? It was called in the heat of the contest, when men and women were starving—chose to starve rather than yield the point

they were fighting for—the right of the workers to a wage that would enable them to live with average wholesomeness and decency. It was thought that an emphatic pronouncement of clergymen and ministers of the gospel would help to settle the contest and stamp the principle of the living wage for all time upon the economics of British labour.

But again, and for the thousandth time, the gospel as it is in the Church proved an utter failure. No wonder a newspaper, noted for its able and just advocacy of the workers' rights, should exclaim, "The Church has again had its chance, and it has missed it."

The proposals placed before the conference were eminently moderate and reasonable. They did not call upon their supporters to decide what is a living wage, in this or that trade, under these or those conditions. They emphasised the principle of a decent living wage as a first consideration in the arrangements between Capital and Labour, leaving the decision upon each case to competent boards of mutually-chosen representatives.

If such a proposal is not an elementary principle of Christian ethics, then one must be excused if he fails to understand what these leaders of religious opinion take to be the teaching of him to whom they look as their inspirer and guide.

Happily for our future prospects, not all present were equally to blame for the miserable fiasco that befel. There were some noble exceptions, both among churchmen and nonconformists; but they formed the minority. One man, who shall be nameless, had in another place a short time before, declared :—

"Even with the *laissez faire* economists, as Mr John Rae had pointed out, the necessary subsistence wage was not a bare living. It was the standard of living which the labourer had himself consented to abide by. The real progress of civilisation was determined by that. The workman must draw a line somewhere, and he must draw it at the living wage, and by that he meant the wage at which a workman, his wife, and children might live in health, decency, and comfort. Could they do that on 13s. 9d. a week? St Paul declared that the first charge on the production of industry must be for the benefit of the actual worker—the miner that laboureth in the bowels of the earth must be the first to partake of the fruits."

These are noble sentiments, eloquently put; but what can we say when the man who uttered them, called upon to give his support to a resolution in favour of the principles he here advocates, executes a complete *volte face*, throwing over his formerly expressed views in a "trimming, diplo-

matic, and conscienceless speech." In one place a living wage could be defined; in the Jerusalem Chamber, "it was absolutely impossible for anyone in that room to define a living wage, or the standard of decent living."

In all these discussions it comes out more and more clearly how hopeless it is to expect anything from the religion of the day—an amorphous and undigested mass of dogmas and precepts that will not coalesce and amalgamate themselves with the life and work of to-day. Saith the Bishop of Ripon: "We are here to express our adherence to great Christian principles, but not to declare how they are to be applied—that is the work of the expert." One had always supposed that these men were experts—experts in regard to the application of divine laws to which all others must be subservient, from which there can be no appeal. If there are "economic laws" that are at variance with these, then these cannot be divine: they must therefore be something else.

Count Leo Tolstoi, almost the only one of his class in this age who has recognised the truth and dared to speak it, has more than once called attention to these things in his vigorous criticisms of our current religion and civilisation, and no apology is necessary in quoting his words on this subject.

"The sun has risen," writes the prophet, "and we can no longer hide what its light makes patent

and visible. We can no longer throw our responsibilities on the Government; excuse ourselves by the plea that the people must be kept under; appeal to the authority of science; invoke the sacred rights of property; allege the necessity of maintaining tradition and law. The sun has risen, the flimsy veil has been torn asunder, and no longer serves to hide the truth. All know, and all see plainly enough, that what we are anxious to preserve and protect is, not the government of the people, but our salaries; not the enlightenment of the ignorant, but our precious honoraria and pensions; not the sacred rights of law and justice, but the income our estates bring in. The reign of concealment and falsehood has come to an end.

"There are but two ways of escape open to the wealthy, non-working, governing classes. One is to announce frankly their apostasy—not merely from Christianity in its true and higher meaning, but from anything like it, from the law of humanity and justice, and boldly to declare: 'We are in possession of certain advantages and privileges, and we mean at any risk to keep them. They who wish to take them away from us will have to measure their strength with us. And we have got power on our side, for we can call to our aid the soldiery, the galleys, the prison, the knout, and the hangman.'

"The only other way of escape is to acknowledge the injustice of the present order of things, to cease to lie, to repent not merely in words, to come to the help of the needy. But not, as during these past two years, with pecuniary contributions made up of money originally extorted from the people themselves. Let them rather break down the wall of separation now dividing the wealthy and working classes; prove, not in words, but in deeds, that they acknowledge a common brotherhood, and because of that are ready to change their lives, renounce the advantages and privileges they enjoy, and, having renounced them, stand on an equal level with the people, and, working with them and for them, strive to attain those blessings of good government, science, and civilisation which are now something apart from the people, but which we always pretend to wish to extend to them."

The great lack of the age is the imagination to realise how utterly and shamefully base is our ideal of life—how unutterably false we are to the great Gospel we—or the greater number of us—profess. The result of nearly nineteen hundred years of Christianity has been to set up and formulate the grossest betrayal that the world has seen. It is as though, with pretended acceptance of the golden rule of conduct, we deliberately wrote it the "rule of gold." Judas was a poor, sordid

soul who could not rise to the realisation of a great cause; but what shall we say of the men who, imagining themselves to be the bearers of his consecration to a divine work, and with no excuse of sudden temptation, like Judas, yet daily sell their Master and his gospel for money.

Max Muller describes the amazement of an Indian convert to Christianity, who, after absorbing the essence of Christian doctrine, came to Europe and saw the actual life of Christians. He could not recover from his astonishment at the complete contrast between the reality and what he had expected to find amongst Christian nations. Everyone who looks at the teachings of the Prophet of Nazareth in their plain, unvarnished sincerity must find himself in the same state of utter amazement. As a fulfilment or realisation of his gospel, "lie" is written on the whole face and front of our civilisation.

We need only look at the life around us—alike in our large towns and our villages—from the point of view of that Indian, who understood the teachings of Jesus in their plain simplicity—we need only look at the crass selfishness, the savage brutalities whereof our life is full, to be appalled at the contradictions in the midst of which we live without scruple, and, with the exception of here and there one, without protest.

CHAPTER IX

"Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

BAD as is the martyrdom that labour suffers to-day, especially in some of its phases, the lowest depth to which the capitalist is capable of sinking in his eagerness to make wealth is happily a thing of the past. At least, we may fervently hope that such is the case, albeit not without some misgiving, seeing the enormous vitality that still pervades the frame of the aboriginal devil of selfishness. Nevertheless, as the story is still within the memory of the living, it may be worth while to go back for a little to read a lesson of what Christian men were debased enough to do for the sake of money in this nineteenth century of Grace.

We are beginning to show a little more humanity to children than formerly, although it will be acknowledged that there is still a very large leeway to be made up in this respect when it is seen to how large an extent the young are even to-day sacrificed to the demon of commercialism. According to the Supplement to the Fifty-fifth Annual Report of the Registrar-General of Births, Deaths, and Marriages,

already referred to, the mortality among the young employed in the textile industry is alarmingly high. Taking the standard for all occupied males between the ages of fifteen and twenty as 100, Dr Tatham finds that there is an excess of exactly a third in the case of the textile workers, whilst in the Lancashire cotton trade we get an excess of 46 per cent., and in the case of dyers and printers the death-rate is no less than 86 per cent. above the average. Speaking of this abnormal waste of young life in these textile factories, a daily paper remarked: "How many of these lads begun work at eleven there is no means of saying; but it is sad to think that at a time when many boys are beginning their school-life, these Lancashire children should be already marked out for premature death at their trade." Sad indeed! But we are improving in regard to the employment of the young. So late as the seventh decade of the century our statute book betrayed many shameful lacunæ in respect to the treatment of children by a people who every Sunday ostentatiously read from the sayings of him who commanded: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

Within fifty years of this year of grace we were employing children of five, six, and seven

years of age in factories. They were turned out of their beds on cold winter mornings at four and five o'clock to go to work, and they did not finish work until six in the evening, often later. It is on record that they were not infrequently found dead on the steps of the factories, where they sat shivering until the doors were opened. They were frozen to death. Many, too, were the deaths amongst these little ones, caused by falling into the machinery, in consequence of being overcome by weariness or sleep.

This is no imaginative picture, no exaggeration, but the plain unvarnished truth. The ghastly unchristian facts are to be read in the bald dry prose of the blue-books of the day, the records of royal commission inquiries.

It will be said, perhaps, that the parents of the little ones were to blame. So they were: but what can you expect if you make dull, cloddish helots of your workers, starve and degrade them till there is hardly a spark of manliness or womanliness left in them, till there is hardly enough humanity to house a soul. But it was different with the capitalist employer. He was educated; he knew that he was treating those slave children differently to what he would have had his own treated; he knew that he was saving the wages of older persons by employing these little ones; in short, he must sometimes have had

the consciousness that he was committing the abysmal meanness of making wealth out of the toil of babes.

I say he must sometimes have had such consciousness, if only when he heard talk of that rule of his religion, "Do to others," etc. And yet, strange to say, the conscience of the nation was but little moved until a noble woman, feeling the whole sin and shame of it in the mother's soul of her, raised her voice and stirred the universal heart with her "Cry of the Children."

> "Do ye hear the children weeping and disproving,
> O my brothers, what ye preach?"

Nor were these the worst of the infamies perpetrated in the name of political economy, for, be it remembered that when Parliament was called upon to interfere for the protection of the young, the most strenuous opposition was made in the interests of the selfish science whose glory it has been to decree the economical subjugation of labour. While children of five and six were being thus done to death by factory labour, others of seven, six, and even four years of age were condemned to work in mines and collieries, while females, "sometimes even pregnant women," were employed in great numbers in labours utterly unfitted for their sex.

In cases where the seam of coal was so narrow

that it was impossible to stand up, "both women and children were obliged to crawl backwards and forwards, like beasts of burden, on all fours, in the passages of pits, dragging trucks loaded with coals by a chain passing from the waist between the legs; and all this often in winter, breathing air strongly charged with carbonic-acid gas, amidst damp, cold, and in an atmosphere of filth and profligacy which could hardly have a thought or feeling of untainted vice." The regular hours of labour for these unfortunate creatures were fourteen or sixteen a day, and they were often exceeded. The poor children were whipped and beaten, overworked and oppressed in every way. Women went up from the pit to be confined, and were down again at their dreadful work in less than a week.[1]

This excessive and unnatural toil produced in the bodies of those who were subjected to it the effects which might be expected: stunted growths, crooked spines, crippled gait, heart diseases, ruptures, asthma, primitive old age, and lastly, death. But if the health of those who laboured in these dark and noisome excavations was undermined, their morals were still more speedily corrupted. The children who were employed were often maimed and even killed with impunity. The language used was shock-

[1] Molesworth: "History of the Reform Bill."

ing, the drunkenness almost universal; the natural modesty of the female sex was altogether cast away, and a frightful recklessness prevailed, which often caused accidents by which these unfortunate beings were instantaneously destroyed.

As there was no regard for human life or human honour in this degrading slavery, so any natural rights of these poor creatures were utterly ignored. The children of paupers were often bound as apprentices to the owners of coal mines, and compelled to work without any remuneration until the age of twenty-one, when their labour was worth from 20s. to 25s. a week. Such was the justice of the mine-owner.

Many of these evils were remedied by Acts of Parliament, after fierce and protracted fighting in the first half of the century. But even so late as 1865-66 a commission of inquiry into the employment of women and children disclosed an amount of suffering amongst a million and a half of young persons and children, occupied in various manufactures and employments not coming under the regulations of the Factory Acts that was appalling. The details of the evidence elicited on the subject were so painful that bills were brought into Parliament to place all manufactures previously carried on without Government inspection under regulations analogous to industries already under those

acts. The sixth and final report of the commission, however, related to women, children, and young persons engaged in agriculture, and its revelations respecting the system of employing agricultural gangs, or companies of young persons and children of both sexes, in Lincolnshire, Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Nottinghamshire, and to some extent in Bedford and other counties were appalling in the extreme.[1]

Nor was the chapter of the economical martyrdom of children closed with the wiping away of the latter scandals. The battle for the emancipation of the children of the brickfields, waged singlehanded for years by one man against the men whose corpus of invested rights and unscrupulous money-getting was at stake, is a story well within the memory of middle-aged people. It was a splendid battle and a splendid victory, winning for education and decent living thousands of children who were being brutalised by cruel and demoralising toil.

One could almost fancy, as one reads the account George Smith gives of the scenes that stirred his heart on behalf of the children of the brickfield, that it was a record of another century. Child labour, for girls as well as for boys, he tells us, began at from seven to eight years of

[1] See "Gladstone and his Contemporaries," page 278, div. 7.

age. Sometimes children were set to work at the age of six, and they worked fourteen and even fifteen hours a day. One day he found a poor little stunted fellow doing a man's work. He put him on the scales and found he weighed just 52½ lb., and yet the poor lad was obliged to carry 43 lb. of clay on his head fifteen miles a day for an average of seventy-three hours weekly. George Smith himself went through the martyrdom, and this is the account he gives of it :—

"At nine years of age my employment consisted in continually carrying about 40 lb. of clay upon my head from the clay heap to the table on which the bricks were made. When there was no clay I had to carry the same weight of bricks. The labour had to be performed almost without intermission for fifteen hours daily. Sometimes my labours were increased by my having to work all night at the kilns.

"The result of the prolonged and severe labour to which I was subjected, combined with the cruel treatment experienced by me at the hands of the adult labourers, are shown in marks that are borne by me to this day." On one occasion, he says, after the usual day's work, "I had to carry 1200 nine-inch bricks from the maker to the floors on which they were placed to harden. The total distance thus walked by me that night was not less than fourteen miles,

seven miles of which I traversed with eleven pounds weight of clay in my arms, besides lifting the unmade clay and carrying it some distance to the maker. The total quantity of clay thus carried by me was five and a half tons. For all this labour I received sixpence!"

The fatigue thus occasioned brought on a severe illness which prevented him from resuming work for several weeks.

Take another picture.

"Children of very early years are sent to the clay-yards and are brought up amidst scenes and conversations which are most demoralising. One can, in fact, scarcely recognise, either in the person or the mind and manner of the female clay-worker, a feature of the sex to which she belongs. I have seen a boy of five years old working among two or three and twenty females, being broken in as they call it, to the labour. In one case a boy of eleven years of age was carrying fourteen pounds weight of clay upon his head and as much more within his arms, backward and forward, from the temperer to the brickmaker, walking eight miles a day upon the average of six days; and another a boy of sixteen carrying green bricks to the floor in the mould, weighing fourteen pounds then, and three pounds, the empty mould, back, and walking eighteen miles a day upon the average.

"I have also seen females of all ages, nineteen or twenty together (some of them mothers of families) undistinguishable from men, excepting by the occasional peeping out of an earring; sparsely clad, up to the bare knees in clay-splashes, and evidently without a vestige of womanly delicacy, thus employed, until it makes one feel for the honour of the country that there should be such a condition of human labour in it."

But, as scenes such as these are now a thing of the past—although I believe girl-labour is still occasionally winked at in some of the Kentish brick-fields—it may be asked, "Why hark back to them at this time of day?" Because, as we have seen, child slavery is not yet a thing of the past. If any one imagines that it is, and in a form dishonourable to the country and a shame on our Christianity, let him turn to Mr Sherard's "White Slaves" (p. 230), and read what he has to say about girl apprentices to chain-making at a wage of 2s. 6d. a week.

"The vision is of such a girl at work in this factory. She was fourteen by the Factory Act, by paternity she was ten. I never saw such little arms, and her hands were made to cradle dolls. She was making links for harrow-chains, and as she worked the heavy Oliver she sang a song. And I also saw her owner approach with

a clenched fist, and heard him say, "I'll give you some golden hair was hanging down her back! Why don't you get on with your work?"

That, for one thing, is why I hark back to these things; and, furthermore, because the labour of children in brickfields, which George Smith exposed, went on in a Christian country, under reputed Christian employers, and to make money for, often to build up the fortunes of, Christian people—and that no more than thirty years ago. In other words, for the sake of selfish gain, men, and women too, were content to see not merely women degraded to a condition almost lower than the beasts, but to be parties to the subjection of children to something worse than slavery. They were content to live—satisfied to augment their gains by the labour of little children almost young enough to be still cradled at their mother's breasts. And does not the same unmanliness—the same unwomanliness—exist still? Do not the idle rich live on the sweat of other men's brows—on the sweat and toil of men to whom they have not the manliness, the womanliness, to pay a just price for their labour; and not only that, but on the toil and drudgery of poor women and little children too. For, be it remembered, in our Christian England, this child-labour still goes on to an enormous extent. In Lancashire alone upwards of 100,000

children are working as half-timers; that is, before they are out of their childhood they are deprived of one half of their opportunities for education, and sent to work to make wealth for the capitalist and the idler.

And what does this labour mean? In a paper on "Factory Children," published in *Hygiene* in May 1891, Dr James S. Torrop, certifying surgeon, Heywood, Lancashire, after giving some statistics showing the unwholesome effect of factory work upon the constitution of children, says: "Factory work is not so excessively laborious; it is the heat, impurity, and dust-laden state of the atmosphere that injures health. The promising child often degenerates into the lean and sallow person of thirteen, and this process is continued until a whole population becomes stunted, and thus the conditions of life in factory towns becomes a real source of danger to England's future. In addition to the loss of physique, it is instructive to note the deterioration in personal appearance. Out of the 2000 children under notice, only 16 could be described as handsome, and of these the larger portion were girls from Ireland."

Arlidge, in the "Diseases of Occupation," referring to the employment of children in factories, says they are more susceptible to poisonous materials, to the depressing influences

of sedentary and monotonous labour, and of confinement in workrooms. They also show greater proclivity to pulmonary mischief from dust and external causes of disease generally. The same writer bears witness to the backwardness of England, as compared with France and Germany, in regard to the control exercised by the State over the construction of factories, the processes of manufacture, and their sanitary circumstances; and in all cases where evidence is forthcoming that disease attends upon a manufacturing process, the State in those countries is much quicker to call in the aid of experienced physicians to investigate the circumstances, and to indicate remedial measures. To this proceeding science is greatly indebted for the knowledge of the causes and results of numerous industrial diseases, and for valuable suggestions for obviating them.

Nor is it in this department alone that we are behind our Continental neighbours, as, in some respects, we have already seen, and as we shall see still more, as we go on. But as regards the sanitary conditions of labour and the thoroughness and universality of labour, we have fallen far into the rear, and it behoves us to set to work in earnest to make up the leeway.

For this backwardness there is the one class that is chiefly to blame—the class that lives upon

the unjust exploitation of others—a class which knows that it so lives because of the ignorance of the masses it deceives and robs, and for that reason hates the name of popular education, knowing with the prescience of guilt that when their inferiors are fully educated their reign will be at an end. This fact alone accounts for their hostility to education—a hostility which is especially noticeable in the rural districts, where in some respects the chances of the boy are smaller as regards education than in the manufacturing districts. For even before he has passed the examination for his agricultural certificate, he is frequently tempted away from school by a small bribe to act as beater to the man with a gun. The attendance officer has an eye on him, of course, and the parents are often fined for these absences; but one rarely, if ever, hears of the shooting gentry being fined for their part in these infractions of the law, although nominally they are liable to a heavy penalty for such offences.

One can hardly believe that men of high moral character — real men — can read these records without a tingling of shame—without some stirring of the ethic of true manhood. O for a little more of that altruist imagination that would enable us to place ourselves in the position occupied by others, and so to judge of things from their point of view! Imagine what a difference it

would make if men would try to do that, instead of wilfully blinding themselves to the truth—instead of so cogging the dice of their logic that it always tells in favour of themselves. We should soon have another race of men if, in place of the worship of greed, of luxury, and of show, they would follow the rule taught by the founder of Christianity, but really almost as old as any written record we possess, and show the same measure of justice and good-will which they would have others manifest towards them.

CHAPTER X

"Woe unto those who lay house to house and field to field."

Let us turn to another aspect of this great cause of Poor versus Rich, Labour versus Capital, which is now being tried at the bar of humanity. Who of us that has not had his heart moved by the touching drama of human passion set forth in the play of "The Merchant of Venice"? Who of us that has not had his nerves thrill with alternate indignation and pity as the trial of the action between Shylock and Antonio goes forward? The Hebrew, with the unfeeling demand for his pound of flesh, seems so heartless that we regard him as the very incarnation of cruelty and revenge, spurred on by the greed of gold. For generations this drama has served to point the moral of iniquitous usury, of unrighteous gain, and we have done a great and long-suffering people the injustice of making it appear that they alone were guilty of such enormities. O self-righteous! Where is there a people more addicted to the crime of poor Shylock than we English? Where is there a people that lives more on its five per cents., that for its ten per cents. and fifty per cents. will wink at blood-

guiltiness? That when it gets the gleam of gold in its eyes will forget its seventh-day ideal—yes, even its manhood and its womanhood?

Was there any more guilt in the poor despised and ill-used old Hebrew's demand for his pound of flesh than, say, in the callous and selfish insistence upon their seven and a half per cent. by the shareholders of the East London Water Company during the so-called water famine? When disease and death were being caused by the scarcity of water, like Shylock they would hear of no abatement of their interest; they would have their bond. Nay, they went considerably further than the Jew in baseness. He did his part according to the contract. They did not. Getting the money for the supply of water beforehand, they wilfully failed to deliver according to "the bond," electing to sell again to another purchaser (*i.e.* the vestries for watering the streets) what was already, by contract, due to others. Did the poor Jew show more hardness of heart, more inhumanity, than the Water Company?

And do we not see the same spirit rampant on every side? Are not the conditions of life among the poor made almost intolerable by it? Wherever the rich man can get his finger he will squeeze flesh and bone for his percentage. Things have come to such a pass that the worker is little better than a bond-slave to the

greed of the gold-sodden. He has been almost expatriated from the land; he has hardly a foot of earth that he can call his own, and for the miserable sty in which he is so often obliged indecently to herd he must pay Shylock even to a fourth of his small earnings. And not only that, but he must pay in blood and bone, aye, and in morals, to boot! For that for which he will oftentimes be compelled to pay to the extent of a quarter of his income is not only in too many cases unsanitary to the last degree, but it does not even afford adequate accommodation for decency of living.

We used to hear a great deal a few years ago about the advance which was being made in regard to the housing of the labouring classes in large towns and cities, especially in London; and we were directed, in evidence thereof, to the huge blocks of buildings on the flat system which were everywhere springing up, financed so often —as was pointed out—by kind-hearted and philanthropic men.

But if anyone, in the light of a larger humanity, would like to judge how far from satisfactory is the way in which the housing question is treated, let him study the little work of Mr Robert Williams, of the Institute of British Architects,[1] a book written, as the author

[1] "London Rookeries and Colliers' Slums."

tells us, "first, to protest against huge dwellings; secondly, to advocate the adoption of the scheme proposed by the London County Council for the prevention of slum dwellings; and, thirdly, to plead generally for more room and better houses for working men." It is an excellent little essay, and calls attention with a touch of real feeling, and not a little of that imaginative insight so often lacking in the treatment of practical questions of the kind, to the vital problem of how the poor are housed.

Speaking of the great blocks of industrial dwellings, which seem to get taller and more hideous year by year, Mr. Williams remarks: "Notwithstanding the good intentions of these builders of huge dwellings, these houses are not heavenly mansions; they are human packing-cases, befouled with carbonic acid constantly given off by the lungs and skins of the people crowded into them. If any doubt, let him, if he possess a healthy sense of smell, go into some of the newest of the fully inhabited dwellings, and he shall find that the carbonic acid far exceeds the amount — namely, 6·6 per 1000 — which Willoughby considers the permissible impurity." This is a very mild way of putting the matter. There are amongst these London model dwellings human warrens which are so dark in the winter that gas has to be kept lighted in the

rooms all day; so badly drained that typhoid and diphtheria are constant concomitants; so wretchedly provided with space that if all the children in the great brick barracks were assembled in the yard there would be found to be but scant room for them.

They must be people easily satisfied if they think many of these barracks any improvement upon the old rookeries. Many persons, indeed, would prefer the latter to some of the dark and dismal abominations that are now to be found in most districts of the metropolis. A gentleman who has given much attention to this subject, as is manifest from his work on "The Dwellings of the Poor,"[1] tells us that there are in and around London upwards of six hundred block dwellings for the working classes on the flat system. About half of these, he opines, are fairly well constructed, but many of the other half are worse than the tenement property they replace, having "close enclosed courts, dark staircases, and gloomy involved passages." Even the best of them are deficient in ventilation, and indeed in almost everything that is requisite for the development of aught but the mere human machine that is so necessary to the proper working of the present politico-economical model of society.

[1] "The Dwellings of the Poor and Weekly Wage Earners in and Around Towns." By T. L. Worthington.

No one who has any feeling for the best interests of human beings can help being profoundly dissatisfied with the existing conditions of all great towns, wherein the working classes are packed together in the narrowest possible compass and compelled to spend from a quarter to a fifth of their income in rent, for which in return they get nothing that is deserving the name of home. The model dwellings which were to solve the problem of the housing of the poor, turn out when constructed so as to provide the "irreducible minimum" of civilisation, to be too expensive for the labourer. His numbers and his labour help vastly to make the ground upon which he stands valuable, with the result to himself that he is not allowed room enough in which to thrive in health and comfort. If he choose the block dwellings, which offer indeed wholesale though costly abiding-places, he must live superimposed layer above layer, with insufficient air, space, and light for the needs of himself and family.

It is not all, however, who can aspire to the accommodation, deficient though it be, of the slummy "model" dwellings; for they are none the less slums because you must go upstairs—groping your way in the dark as often as not—to find your den. Some must perforce put up with a still lower level of shelter and housing

space than is afforded by the third-rate dwellings on the flat system. What those lower levels are, and how tenanted, is shown almost every day in the metropolis by some ghastly side-light or lurid show. Let us take an instance at random. A fire had broken out in a house let room by room, or rather corner by corner, and before rescue was at hand a victim or two had been claimed by the flame fiend. The police found the place a "perfect rabbit warren," says the daily paper. An inquest had of course to be held, and when the facts were laid before the coroner, he seemed to doubt his hearing. "There had been ghettos," he exclaimed; "but there was no need of that sort of thing in England."

So he appeared to think, as do doubtless tens of thousands of others; but whatever the need—"in England"—the fact exists nevertheless, as a juror promptly showed him. "You will find that sort of thing all round this neighbourhood" (Spitalfields), he quietly observed. "What! fourteen people in one room?" exclaimed the coroner. The juror declined to pledge himself to that particular number; but he said that he certainly knew of seven or eight in one room of a house tenanted by thirty or forty persons. And this is no exaggeration. Any one who cares to take the trouble may see houses of three storeys in which every room is occupied by a different

family, the family in some cases numbering from six to eight persons.

Nor is it in Spitalfields alone, nor in the East End generally, but everywhere throughout the metropolitan area, that this overcrowding and the consequent man-rot takes place. We have recently heard how even in Soho, and the very heart of London wealth and luxury, the same thing exists—an evil and a misery made in the first instance by the unnatural affluence of one class, and then preyed upon by the vicious idleness and unchecked licence of that class, from the highest to the most obscure.

Moreover, not the least astounding circumstance of the whole damnable concatenation is that, if you take the trouble to inquire, you will find some "Christian" landlord at the back who profits by this overcrowding and consequent demoralisation. One old hunks, of delectable memory, took to this sort of thing as affording a special field for speedy gains. He was ever on the look-out for dilapidated property; the worse the neighbourhood the better for him; and however "slummy," he never hesitated to buy. Then, if it was ruinous when he purchased, it soon became worse under his hands. He never repaired: that was not his game; he knew that if it were condemned by the authorities he would get compensation. So he plied his trade, let his rookeries room by room, collected the

rents himself, and woe the man or woman who was unable to pay the rent when due. "Out they go," said he, describing his methods, "I stand no nonsense, and their stuff must pay." "Do you never have any pity on them?" "Pity's no part of business; pity won't pay my bills," was the ferocious answer. It may be added that this rook was a sincere—if a misguided—Christian. He took the sacrament regularly once a month, and boasted that he had missed but twice or thrice in forty years. When once expostulated with for the harshness and cruelty to his tenants, and asked if it was the sort of conduct to win him heaven, he replied that the Lord had promised that whosoever partook of his flesh and drank of his blood should inherit eternal life, adding with some vehemence: "It's a contract—it's a contract—and God dare not break it!"

This is no doubt an extreme type; but we have only to look round us to see how closely it is paralleled in the conduct of professedly Christian men and women in every town and village of the country—men and women who would probably look at you in blank amazement if you hinted that their treatment of others, upon whom they live like the mother of the horse-leech, was other than what it should be—so little are they in the habit of nicely judging what is due from them to others of their kind.

As an instance in point, let us take a few lines from the Report of the Sweating Committee, already drawn from more than once. Referring to the dwellings of the chain and nail-makers of Cradley Heath and Bromsgrove, it says: "The houses in which these people live are generally of the most squalid and deplorable kind." And this judgment is fully justified by the evidence of men like the Rev. H. Rylett. "I was in a home only the other day," said this gentleman; "the fire-place was a wreck, and there had not been a bit of whitewash or anything of that kind done in that house for seven years; and a woman who stood near said, 'I have lived seventeen years in my house, and the landlord has done nothing to it.'" Often enough there are no drains, and if there be any, they are defective. Mr Ker, the certifying surgeon of the district, testified that heaps of manure were often to be found opposite the workshops and dwellings; and that typhoid was "much more common than it ought to be."

One witness said he had known cases where there were holes in the roof, where buckets had to be kept in the bedrooms to catch the water pouring through the roof. He found other houses so extremely damp that there was actually a fungoid growth on the wall—breast high. The district was "all left to hazard."

Nor is it only in large cities and manufacturing

towns that these disgraceful rookeries—in which the worker must perforce be content to live and die—are permitted to exist.

In the rural districts the evil is quite as bad, if, indeed, not worse. It has been the subject of consideration of many royal commissions, and like most things, touched by such "royal" bodies, it not only remains a blot upon our intelligence and humanity, but a sore that mocks our boasted civilisation. All these commissions have given expression to the same sentiments in regard to the scandalous way in which the labourers, especially the agricultural labourers, are housed in all parts of the country. In the words of the report of one of these commissions, "the agricultural labourer lives under conditions that are physically and morally unwholesome and offensive"; while the Welsh Land Commission describes the housing of the poor people in the Principality as absolutely disgraceful.

Moreover, this condition of things exists notwithstanding the Houses of the Poor Act, which was placed in the Statute book to remedy the evil. A careful inquiry recently made by a Committee of the Land Law Reform Association, showed that the Act is a dead letter in villages and country districts. In a conference on rural housing held in May 1897, Sir Walter Foster stated that the results of that inquiry went to

show that in sixty-seven parishes, comprising between 3000 and 4000 houses, one-fifth of the cottages were reported to be bad, or very bad—not simply poor and insufficient—while sixty-one per cent. of the bedrooms in these cottages were without fireplaces, and therefore could have no proper or healthy ventilation; and one-sixth of the cottages had an extremely bad and dangerous water supply. In a second inquiry, involving 240 villages and about 10,000 houses, one-half of the villages complained of the cottages being bad, one-fifth complained of insufficient cottage accommodation, while there were thirty cases of gross overcrowding, and in one-sixth of the total number of cottages there was an inadequate and dangerous water supply. As an instance of the overcrowding, he mentioned cases of cottages with one bedroom, occupied in one case by a man, his wife, and six children, the eldest a girl 15 years of age; in another case by a man, his wife, four children, and two young men lodgers. These are typical cases.

At the same conference Mr F. A. Channing, M.P., stated that the result of the above-named inquiry showed that, not merely here and there, but almost everywhere in England and Wales, a large proportion of the cottages of the agricultural labourers were insanitary, and quite unfit for human habitation.

Mr Williams, to whose book, "London Rookeries and Colliers' Slums," reference has been made above, gives some vivid descriptions of the disgraceful housing accommodation that is provided for coal-miners in different parts of the country. The following is a dainty sketch of what the miners' dwellings are like in South Wales :—

"Here are several rows built against the mountain side, each row overtopping the last as they ascend. The spaces between the rows are very narrow—a sort of compromise between a footpath and a road. There are neither gardens nor back-yards, nor is there a forecourt. The front door abuts the footpath and opens at once into the living room. A door stands open ; we enter the living room measuring 13 ft. by 11 ft. . . . The ceilings are very low and the back of the house is perpetually damp, owing to the level of the ground at the back being much higher than the ground-floor, and the absence, as usual, of a damp-course. It is a hovel and nothing more ; and the scores of cottages adjoining are like it—indeed some that were looked into were in a more deplorable state, what with bad repair and uncleanly habits of the tenants. Yet the rent of such hovels ranged from 4s. 5d. to 4s. 11d. per week."

The same sort of thing is to be found all over

our God-blessed England. Wherever you find a toiler, be he artizan or agricultural labourer, unskilled worker, or one who risks his life daily in mine, on the railway, or wherever there is risky work to do, there you will discover tenements for his habitation to which it is a degrading misnomer to give the name of house. They are small, they are insufficient for the decent accommodation of a family ; and yet there are "gentlemen" and "ladies," too—God save the mark !—who are debased enough to take rent for them.

Moreover, there cannot be an independent movement, no matter how humble, to improve the conditions of living amongst the labouring poor, but this upper fringe of idle selfishness and luxury grasps at, and generally manages to gobble, their portion out of the betterment. The *Church Reformer* recently instanced a parish (Christ Church, Southwark) where doles of bread to the value of £350 had the effect of raising rents in the tenement houses therein over those paid in adjoining districts. Mr Benjamin Jones, of the Co-operative Union, in his evidence before the Town Holdings Committee, 1887 (Q. 10,780/2), showed how a co-operative society at Woolwich caused an increase in the letting value of neighbouring cottages.

To the same effect is a statement made by the *Clarion* of November 4th, 1896, according to

which the result of an agitation by the Deptford Labour Protection League was not only to raise wages in H.M. Naval Victualling Yard from 15s. to 19 and 20 shillings a week, but also to raise rents, "so that the landlords are practically getting nearly all the benefit of the increase of wages."

Thus, in the words of the late Professor Rogers, "Every permanent improvement of the soil, every railway and road, every bettering of the general condition of society, every facility given for production, every stimulus supplied to consumption, raises rent. The landowner sleeps, but thrives." Every path of improvement has a switch into the capitalist's belly.

And even with all this, for the miserable hovels which the labourer is so often compelled to inhabit there is no fixity of tenure. He may be turned out at a week's notice, and hence has no inducement to improve the place and make it comfortable and home-like. If not evicted, the effect of his industry would probably be to cause an addition to be clapt on to his rent.

It is astounding to think that this sort of thing is going on all over these islands, and that multitudes of sufferers tamely submit. For, terribly as the evil weighs upon the labouring poor, it is not they alone who are the victims. In every part of England, in every town and village, from London outwards, it will be found that the man

who holds the land will not sell it, but merely let it on lease to those who want to build. In other words, the landless can only provide himself with a home if some rich man chooses to permit him; and even then often only on the condition that the house he builds, and all the money he spends upon it, shall be confiscated at the termination of the lease for the landlord's personal benefit.

How the thing works out may be seen not only in every town of the realm, but almost in every village; albeit, one must acknowledge some few noble exceptions to the almost universal rule of landlord greed. Only in November last the Rev. W. Mantle took the occasion of the municipal elections to tell the Mayor and Corporation of Devonport how the town suffered from the way in which men of capital neglected the public interests in their grasping after money. "Devonport was," he said, "the very worst of all the towns in England for overcrowding. At that very moment, not three hundred yards from the church, there was a room where a bed-ridden girl had been lying for five years. The mother's corpse had occupied for four days a corner of the same room, and at least two adults tried to sleep in the room every night. In darkest Africa, said the reverend gentleman, they would not find so much disrespect and disregard for the feelings of humanity as was to be found in Devonport."

A London paper a short time ago supplied a still more ghastly picture. It is cited to enable the reader "to realise how disease is spread"—by "tailoring operations conducted under the conditions . . . witnessed in T——e Court." "From one of these rooms," the report goes on, "proceed the sounds of what dwellers in the East-end recognise as the keeping of a wake. In one corner, surrounded by candles which have been burning all night . . . there lays the dead body of the woman of the family. It has been there for five days already, and unless a magistrate's order is obtained for its removal, it will be there another five days at least; for the resources of the family do not admit of the pre-payment of the undertaker, and that functionary refuses to discharge his duties unless prepaid. In another corner upon some filthy bedding, grown-up young men and women are herded indiscriminately together, having not yet risen. An attempt is being made to prepare some breakfast over a few embers in the grate, and two or three adult relatives of the deceased are paying their respects to the dead in snuff-taking, and other congenial occupations, while awaiting the frugal meal."

A characteristic specimen of English savagery this, worthy to go down to posterity from this latter end of the nineteenth century. There are,

of course, many elements that go to the brewing of such a kettle of broth; but first and foremost stands the condition of land-monopoly which makes it next to impossible for the poor to get proper house-room, and so conduces more than almost anything else to such overcrowding that many of the lower districts of London are, as the direct result, simple hells of vice. It is difficult to contemplate such scenes without one's thoughts being carried to that Gilded Chamber where any and every effort to bring the question of the land and the decent housing of the poor to a reasonable solution is incontinently strangled by the "lords, temporal and spiritual," and seeing a parallel between that hall of incarnate selfishness and the one so magnificently described by Milton in his Paradise Lost, that famed—

> Pandemonium; the high capital
> Of Satan and his peers; . . .
> . . . they but now who seemed
> In bigness to surpass earth's giant sons,
> Now less than smallest dwarfs . . .
> . . . like that Pygmean race
> Beyond the Indian mount.

The more one contemplates this question of the housing of the poor, the more clearly one perceives that it will never be settled in a satisfactory manner so long as it is allowed to remain in the hands of the landholders or the five-per-center, benevolent and godly though he be.

Fifty years ago Charles Kingsley drew attention to the same blot in scathing words, describing the agricultural labourer as worse housed than the landlord's hacks and pointers. He was followed by others, notably by Cardinal Manning, who, when he was with us, used to speak of this housing question as one of crying urgency, and transcending in importance all other social questions of the day. He held that people could not lead decent or human lives in the narrow and crowded quarters of our great towns, and that the existence of masses of the population on the brink of barbarism imperilled the very existence of society.

No one since the days of Robert Owen has laid greater stress on the vital connection between circumstances and character, environment and progress, than this friend of the London poor. But, notwithstanding his persistent warning, and that of many others, including that of Lord Shaftesbury, another of the social reformers of our time, not only has little or nothing effective been done to remedy the evil, but it is confessedly more deplorable and disgraceful now than it ever was before. Moreover, recent developments show that it is becoming even worse. The scarcity of houses is so greatly felt in some districts of England and Wales that we hear of men being forced, with their families, to take refuge in the work-

house, even while in full work, because they could find no other place wherein to lodge their wives and children.

Since 1851, Dr Bowmaker reminds us, the Legislature and the municipalities have toyed with the housing question. There have been commissions and committees, permissive measures which no self-respecting municipality could adopt because of their ruinous compensation clauses, and Public Health Acts, which, with all their powers for spreading sweetness and light, could not make bad houses good, or bring sun and air through brick walls. Let the man who grumbles at the amount of legislation for life and labour nowadays read this chapter in our history, take note of the taint of property that runs through the Housing Acts—property of ground landlords in death areas and fever areas, property of jerry-builders in houses unfit for habitation—and remember that we are called on now to deal with the arrears of a century of neglect. Let the man of science who objects to making things easy for the weakly remember that in the opinion of the Registrar-General, who is no sentimentalist, but a student of the statistics of life and death, the present course of town life is one of steady degeneration and deterioration, "a system which leads to the survival of the unfittest."

It seems pretty plain that nothing effective will

be done to remedy the evil until the workers take the matter into their own hands, and force a solution.

We often hear it suggested as a means of putting an end to overcrowding in towns that the toiler should be got away into the country after his day's work is done. But the fear—nay, the certainty—is that such remedy would be worse than the evil, considering the monopolist's deadly grip on the land, and the capitalist's notion of what is suitable as housing for the worker, when we see a wealthy railway company accommodate its labourers at the rate of two bedrooms for eleven persons, or, say two bedrooms for a family, as is the case within gunshot of the place in which these lines are written. Where the benefit of such stying would be to the worker at the end of a long 'bus or train journey from his work one fails to see.

It is satisfactory, so far as it goes, to learn that this question is not dealt with in the same miserly and inhuman way all over. Manchester it appears is ahead of London in some important particulars, such as the stipulation of a minimum height of nine feet for all rooms, not attics, in new houses. Admirable regulations in regard to window space also exists, and—still more admirable!—no house is now allowed to be put up without proper provision for personal cleanliness.

Happy Manchester! So different to the waterless desert of East London, where, up to within a few months ago, a bath for the poor in certain districts was an impossibility, unless it was taken in a mud puddle or a cesspool.

To all right-thinking persons the spectacle of men and women who never do a hands-turn of productive or profitable work holding such a deadly grip on the land as to make decent housing for the poor an impossibility is nothing less than shameful, and the century we are so soon to enter upon—the century of drastic evolution or revolution—will hold and stamp as shameful beyond all measure of shame the attitude of men who, living upon a tribute extorted from the blood and sinews of the workers, and doing nothing for what they receive, are still found capable of abusing their privilege and their position to the extent of being parties to the degradation and demoralisation of those from whom they derive their wealth, while claiming to be the mirrors of righteousness and honour.

So long as this crying evil and injustice exist, and they stand mutely by, their righteousness and honour are but as blemished beauties tricked out in paint. If they would justify their christianity and the common boasts of our civilisation, let them stand forth and act in accordance with their pretended beliefs, and not be satisfied with

mumbling and genuflecting in their places of worship. And let their lordships the bishops begin. Let them rise to a man in their places in the House of Lords and register their honest protest against the abominations of money-sweating demoralisations, and luxurious living at the expense of others' deprivation, and they will set a wind blowing that shall sweep away these foul Christian ghettos, the breeding-places of sin and crime, in a generation.

CHAPTER XI

"He that ruleth over men must be just."

Can one wonder that men, at length emancipated from the condition of utter ignorance that formerly weighed them down, and in which their masters were so long successful in keeping them, are now bent upon bringing about a new era, are combining everywhere for that purpose? And, if wisdom and moderation continue to guide their counsels, are sure to attain the desired end? Can one wonder that, getting ideas of science into their minds, getting also a knowledge of the constitution of the universe, and of their own frames and organisation, they are beginning to read new rights into old wrongs?

In conversation with a gentleman not long ago, one of these men related how lately he had been drawn to listen to a course of lectures on astronomy, and how they had given him quite a new idea of human life and human destiny. Said he—"If there is all that wondrous balance and harmony in the universe—all its various parts adapted so perfectly one to another, and acting one with another to a common end—

giving one the idea of an ordered dance of joy, it seems to me that the same mind which created that harmony must have intended that human beings should live together in a similar state of unison, but that we have somehow got jangled and out of tune, so that we neither dance for joy, as we should, nor send up a pure song of gladness and praise, such as one would imagine the rhythmic movements of the stars and planets in their courses give forth."

It was a striking idea this man had got hold of. He was indeed turning science to its noblest end, bringing down its highest teachings to the bettering and uplifting of our human life. Well might he draw a hope for our future on earth from the ordered movements of the stars and suns and even the erratic comets in space.

And can any man who has studied the divine mould in which the universe is cast deny that there was a great presumption of truth in this man's conception? Will any one who has sent the plummet line of his thought into the depths of this mighty and unfathomable universe dare to say that the divine intellect that measured out the heavens with such justness and equity, and fitted the orbs in space with such niceness and balance, failed when he came to build and fashion the human clay?

No; however much, to our sorrow, we mortals

may ignore it, there is an ever-during principle of justice—a principle of divine justice—that reigns throughout all space, that permeates all things, and that in the end will bring all things to a perfect balance. It is coeval and coextensive with the Omniscient himself. It must be so. When he was justice was. It is the principle of his being and rules in all his works.

His divine order, too, regulates the just treatment of man by man, as surely as his divine order regulates the movements of the orbs in space. The difference is that, in the case of the heavenly bodies, they are moved and regulated in harmony with the celestial music of the divine mind, or the principle divine, which called the whole into being; whereas in human beings the divinity has planted some will, some power to select and choose. For his greater glory, we may imagine, he did not wish men to be mere machines, automatic instruments, but beings of varied powers, and with a knowledge of right and wrong. He therefore placed in them the power to know and to act in full accord with justice—that divine flower from whose every part flows harmony and beauty.

It was a beautiful saying of Emmanuel Kant's that there are two things in the universe whose sublime grandeur strikes the mind with awe, "the

starry heavens and the moral nature in man." He saw in the two things the same expression of the divine mind, the one being but a counterpart of the other. To the great Original nothing is stupendous, nothing is small. Just as the same law which governs the largest sun governs also the smallest moon or satellite, the one being but as an atom in comparison with the other; so in human affairs there is one law alike for all—one immutable law, which may be shirked, but cannot in the end be evaded.

It is as though the one acted upon the other, the greater upon the less, the less upon the greater, and that in the course of the ages something of the divine order that rules the larger universe had instilled itself into the mind of man. But for that human society could not have continued to exist. It would have destroyed and annihilated itself. Century after century, however, we behold the work going forward, and the human mind becoming more and more subdued to the grander harmony, or, to put it more truly perhaps, being attuned to the harmony of the spheres. And this progress must still go on in an ever-increasing ratio. Nothing, one must believe, can stop it—nothing short of a universal cataclysm.

Without a firm belief in such an advance men would lose all hope—all stimulus to effort for a larger life. Were we compelled to the belief

that there is no such thing as eternal harmony—what in one aspect of human affairs we call justice—one would not wish to live. Life would be a mockery. It is our moral, our spiritual magna charta that somewhere and somewhen there must be a divine rectification, a full and complete compensation.

Everything must reach its counterpoise sometime. It could not in the nature of things be otherwise. As that law obtains in the cosmos, so must it be in our little world. In the stupendous motions of the orbs in space there is no constant and unvarying uniformity, but a moving as it were from apogee to perigee, a flux and reflux, a pulling this way and a rebound that—no undeviating line, but a perfect balance. Do we not see it in summer and winter, in day and night, in storm and calm, in what we call life and death? These are necessary conditions. Life cannot be an unchanging thing, else it would not be life. There must be birth, growth, and decay, and these cannot be without change. And change means a rise and a fall, a time of flood and a time of ebb, a time to fly out and a time to return on its arc. Thus everything—in human life as in the planetary spheres—must complete its round, fill out its full circle.

Were it not for this principle of balance, of compensation, of rectification, the life of the

universe, so to speak, could not go on. So it is in human affairs. We can see how law asserts itself; how evil brings about its own inevitable punishment, how in the end all wrong-doing entails disaster. Our present state is one of misery and unhappiness, because we have not fully appreciated the immutability of the moral as well as of the physical laws—because we do not see that a "right" pushed to the length of a "wrong" must in time bring its own retribution.

We have seen, for instance, how a class drove into far-off lands men who could no longer find a foothold in their own country because that class had seized and appropriated to themselves nearly all the soil of the realm. We have seen how for a time they profited by their greed, and fancied that by making laws to further their own ends they would profit for ever. But how short-sighted and futile it all proved. The sons and grandsons of the very men they drove from their steadings in the old home are now gradually making it impossible for the wrong-doers to live on the acres they so unrighteously took from the people. Thus nature, stronger than governments, is rectifying the old injustice, and knelling the downfall of a class which, riveting its fakir-like gaze upon its own navel, failed to see, in the phrase of the Stoic emperor, that what is good for the swarm is good also for the bee.

That lesson they have yet to be taught, and if they are wise they will learn it quickly.

Of course in the bringing about of the present crisis in which the world finds itself, the governing classes are not wholly to blame; the workers have not been impeccable. How could it be otherwise, ignorant and brutal as they were for so long kept. But one must hold that the wealthy classes have done more towards forcing it to the front than the wage-earners, because they have been systematically unjust. The great fault of the worker has been, and is yet, his ignorance, which puts him too often at the mercy of the wily agitator, as well as making him the tool of the designing intriguers at the opposite end of the social scale, who are never tired of repeating Jacob's abysmal meanness in taking advantage of their brothers' hunger to delude them out of their birthright. It makes no difference that the mess of pottage is a basin of cheap soup, or a charity blanket, and that idle Rachels are in the deception.

It is the same with the capitalist employer, who for the sake of a small percentage more, or for a little more wealth, is ever ready to forget his patriotism, the commonweal, even the character of just and humane man. The wage-earner fights for a shilling or two more to spend upon the needs of his family; the capitalist for more

luxury. The worker's is a struggle towards a larger humanity, the capitalist's—though he may not perceive it—towards a degraded manhood. For that is the end brought about by the curse of gold, and that is what the moneyed classes have long been under—the curse which, if anything, will bring England down, nay, which will most assuredly bring her down, unless something be done to cure the disease.

It was injustice brought about by the greed for gold that toppled Tyre in the dust, that brought down Babylon, Rome, the shameless iniquity and blood-guiltiness of Spain—the curse of the accumulation of gold in the hands of the few, making them arrogant and tyrannical over the many. And never before—not even in Rome, not even in Spain—was the tyranny of gold, and the injustice caused by it, so great as it is in England to-day. Never did the millionaire so lord it before and over the world as now; never, notwithstanding our Christianity, was there such worship of wealth, never such wide-spread sanction and ready support of schemes for the plunder of the many in behalf of the few.

In the United States they have awakened to the fact: perhaps they—the people with the most democratic institutions in the world—are feeling the weight more poignantly than we in Great Britain. The all-powerful "boss," with his trusts

and his monopolies, strides the country like a colossus, and strangles every effort of the wage-earners and the poorer traders to defend or protect their interests. For the sake of his ungodly pocket millions must toil for a pittance and find the necessaries of life made almost beyond their reach. His fingers itch to "corner" everything. But they are still alive, those people, and before long we shall see them turn and corner the boss, or the signs are deceptive.

We have seen the attempt made to introduce the same thing in England; nay, we see it being made all about us to-day. But let the conspirators take heed of what they do. The British is on the whole a patient and slow-moving animal; but there comes a time when, as a noble lord once put it, he "gets tired of playing Job." It will not pay to try to force the worker back into the position of degradation he formerly held. Under the heel of the monster accumulation of gold of the nineteenth century his position is precarious enough. Quite enough is he exploited and forced to produce for the benefit of this ungodly Mammon—for those who have the means to command and the meanness to thrive upon his labour.

To put a man, and still more a woman, in the position that they must accept your offer of work at your own price or starve is to take

an advantage for which there is no other name but devilish. It is no better than compelling a man to sign a contract with a halter round his neck. Nay, it is worse. For, if the worker had simply to put his own life on the stake, he might be willing to risk it; but it is the thought of the helpless ones dependent upon him that compels submission.

Your contract is never a righteous one unless both parties thereto can accept or reject it without causing personal suffering. When men are men, and love righteousness—right-wiseness—they will see that it is so.

The time will surely come when mankind will waken to the wrong—to the infamy—of this sort of thing. The ages creep on, even though it be but slowly, and gradually with the passing of the centuries we see some improvement, some advance in humanity. There was a time when men ate each other. But by degrees the consciousness of kinship and unity in mankind grew to such an extent that this man-eating became impossible, and it ceased. Then there was a time when men procured the labour of others by violence and made slaves of their fellows. They thought nothing of murdering the adult population of a whole district, and bringing up their children to servitude. But in course of the ages the conscience of mankind came to

see that it was a degradation both to the slave and to the master to stand in this relation to each other, and so with the higher races it fell into disuse. Slavery still exists, though for the most part in concealment, and against the law of the more civilised peoples. But even among the most enlightened, where slavery in the ancient form is held in abomination and horror, this other method of enslavement is still tolerated and even defended by Christian men. It is defended by them on the ground that it is in accordance with sound political economy. But the time will come, and that we must believe soon, when men will hold it just as shameful to take advantage of men's necessities, and of their children's hunger, to enslave and degrade them, as to hold them in physical bondage, and to buy and sell them as was formerly done.

Most men now see that the system of slavery was as degrading to the holder as to the slave. The blot was one that touched all, so that none under its withering blight could rise to the true dignity of manhood. So will it be with the system at present in vogue. We shall come to perceive that it is degrading, incompatible with the character of true humanity, to subject another to thraldom by the force of hunger and cold, and intellectual and spiritual

deprivation. It will begin, as indeed it has, with the best men and the best women who will see that it is nobler to work more themselves and spare more for others, than that others should suffer in order that they may do less and enjoy more. And so the sense of human justice and human brotherhood will grow from more to more.

It cannot be otherwise if we work out the hieroglyphics of the divine code, which are written everywhere about us, not only within, but round and athwart the vast azure-tinted and sun-lighted chamber in which we live. And perhaps, to the right intellects, they may not be so cryptic as at first sight they appear. It is the province of human reason and human faith and endeavour to find out and investigate that code and apply its laws, not only in personal conduct, but in political measures, social organisation, and the multifarious relations of daily life. Until we have done this, or in some large measure done it, we have failed to justify the high claim we make for ourselves of being creatures guided by moral, reasonable, and religious considerations.

CHAPTER XII

"My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant."

THERE goes a most subtle alchemy to the making of a man—an alchemy that demands tribute of elements and influences from suns and stars, from the winds of heaven and the waters of ocean, from the mountains above and the plains beneath, from field and forest and moorland, from toil and play, from laughter and tears, from the time that was and the time that is to come, from bird and beast and fish, from all things and all places, even the profoundest depths of the deep heart of man.

All this is provided for in the Creator's laboratory—in this swinging, revolving meat-jack of a world, with its great central fire and its numberless little gleams, all raining influences. From the cherishing love and kindling thought fashioning the embryo in the mother's womb to the light and air and warmth, the pregnant water, and the ever-plenteous building material of food, and over and above all the abounding beauty and entrancing wonder to rejoice and inspire—all these are there, ready to hand and eye and heart, as the growing and developing mortal needs.

The great He who planned the man made provision for all that was requisite for his building-up and adornment according to his design. All things are provided in plenty—and the child's birthright is to enjoy them in abundance and in season. It must be so; else has the Maker and Master of the whole bidden his men-children make bricks without the needful straw—which is impossible.

And yet—and yet—if we look about us, O penurious souls of men! what do we see? The poor mother when she should be at rest, dreaming and thinking of beautiful and sacred things, gestating the immortal soul of the man or woman that is to be—we see her even now, in the supremest hours of her being, compelled to toil in unwholesome factories and workshops, in field and furrow, for her miserable dole of food. And when the little ones in their growing years are in need of all the light and warmth, food and fresh air, and all the stimulating and ennobling influences of God's great fields and open spaces, they are confined to narrow, fœtid alleys, with their cold, damp stones and hideous surroundings; yes, and then, after being starved and stinted through the long years of childhood and youth, we hold up hands of pious horror, or spit out unseemly words of scorn, because the resultant man, the completed woman, is something

short of perfect—something less than the divine ideal which the Planner had in view. We have debarred them the full run and tuition of his glorious laboratory, and put them in the factories which man has devised for the growing of abortions—and then, forsooth, we talk of it as the result of his providence, insolents that we are!

Did it never occur to the sapient weavers of political economics, to statesmen of the abasement, to consider the Almighty's plan and intention apart from the thought of their own sub-diaphragm space and pantry? Did it never occur to them in some spare, brief moment of detachment to ponder the covenant which he, the designer and maker, has made with man? Did they never by any chance get an inkling of the great text that is written all about them? Was no passing glimpse ever revealed to them, by faintest flash of inspiration or rush of insight, of that veracious contract and covenant, graven on every vessel and organ, in every bone and ligament of man's body? It is imprinted in every line, in every dint of the sculptor's fashioning thumb—lettered in big on every column and entablature of his magnificent temple — yea, flashed and musicked forth from every rill and bird-throat, from every cloud and whirling rain-pillar, from each up-springing wheat-blade and down-shooting star and star-gleam.

But degenerate-souled man, saying to himself, "This is for labour and toil only, for sordid cares, for misery, for premature death—what need they of grace and refinement, of over-much soul, or even of body more than is sufficient to do our work?—and so saying, stints the ennobling draught of beauty and of thought, and mars by greed the perfect model as it left the Maker's hand.

Here is an authentic document, taken down many years ago from the lips of one who had for long years read and pondered over this subject of man and his position and his relation to the universe—one whose university was the world, and whose tutor and inspirer the deep unfathomed heart of humanity. It is entitled "God's Covenant with Man."

"In the beginning," says this scripture, the Creator of man, as of the universe, made a contract with the outcome of his handiwork. It is a covenant as true, and therefore as sacred as any word in the Holy Scriptures, on which the world justly places so high a value. It is written in the most legible characters upon man's organisation. Therein it is clearly laid down and stipulated how a man shall live, and what he shall do; what shall be his reward for the proper fulfilment of his part of the covenant; and what will be the punishment for neglect and disobedience.

"By this 'everlasting covenant,' the document

continues, 'it is ordained that man shall use the hands with which he has been provided for the earning of his daily bread.' For that purpose they were fashioned so wondrously, for that purpose given him; to that end also the earth was made fruitful, and bestowed on him to till and to garner in its increase.

"The contract further ordains that when he arrives at the age of maturity and reason man shall take to himself a wife, not only that life may thereby be made the more beautiful and the more agreeable to him, but that the creative purposes of the Almighty may be carried out. The helpmate he thus espouses he is bound to love and support in all honour, and to give equal love and honour and reverence to the children that are the fruit of their union, working for them with patience and diligent foresight, allowing no man to take that right from him, and permitting none to oppress or degrade them. To this end he is given strength and courage to do and dare all things.

"God has further covenanted with man that in requital of his labour he shall have food and raiment proper and sufficient; for without these he cannot do his allotted work, nor fulfil his other divinely-imposed duties as he should; and to this end He hath placed him on a bounteous land which requires but his intelligent care and labour

to produce all he needs both for himself and wife, and for the children that have been given to them as a charge, to nourish and support and to bring up to right manhood and womanhood.

"There is nothing that man needs during his sojourn on this earth that is not provided in plenty, and provided, be it remembered, not by man, not by kings, not by aristocracies, but by the Almighty Father himself. His sun, his rain, his co-working elements do it all, man only giving a little diligent labour, a little foresightful thought, to help forward the harvest, and to gather and garner it in season.

"In such plenty is this provision made by the Great Giver that there is sufficient for man not only during his days of strength and active labour, but also for the time when the fires of life are burning low, and he can only go feebly about, waiting for the cloak of darkness that shrouds his way to the great light.

"This is all set forth not only in the secret chambers of man's heart, but in the pictured house in which he has been placed to dwell for a season, wherein, wedded to every picture is a tongue, and in every tongue a voice, and in every voice a light, fashioned to sing, and thunder, and flash forth his meaning. And woe unto him who shall misread and mishear. Woe to the man who, daring to misconstrue His

thought, lays hands on more than his share, assumes a personal right over any of the things of the Great He, to the wrong and scanting of another. By so doing he commits a sacrilege against the Almighty law and ordinance, and offends against his everlasting covenant with man. And sorrowfully must he answer for it; for the grave is not the end, but only the stepping-stone to God's reckoning place.

"Every breach of this contract has its appropriate penalty. For the assumption of a right over things that do not belong to him a man's punishment is degradation. The man who fails to work for that which he eats and wears soon becomes less than a man, for it is the crown of true manhood that a man shall work. Some who do not work, or who are not allowed to work, die of starvation. Such physical death is better than the death of the soul, the gradual decay of manhood, which is the penalty of him who goes idly to the grave. Every infraction of God's contract is fraught with disease. But the worst disease of all is that which insensibly but surely seizes the man who lives upon the labour of others, especially if those others be women and children.

"One cannot conceive that the Almighty could hold anything in greater contempt than such a one, who with hands, and arms, and strength to work, and with brain to think, yet lives on

the toil of his kind, who, because they have to slave for him, must themselves suffer want. He puts himself in the place of one who has been born perhaps a cripple or idiotic. Such a person must go into the life to come maimed of his manhood. For is it not by work—by effective doing—that we attain true manhood, that we acquire the character that is well-nigh everything here, and that must be more hereafter?

"This divine contract of rights and duties is inscribed so plainly and unmistakably on man's organisation, that it would be a mockery to predicate the existence of a God on any other supposition. If he is, he is just, and therefore would not write a lie.

"There is also another contingency for which the Creator has mercifully provided. In his wisdom, foreseeing that, in the latitude of freedom he has given to his creatures, some of them would descend to a lesser rank of being than he designed, and make life here unendurable to others by their injustice and tyranny. Therefore, while he allows to man no voice or choice as regards his coming into the world, he has left the way out open and unrestrained. Hence if any son or daughter of Adam feel that life is impossible without ignominy or degradation, it is only necessary to will it, and the way is free for them to go back to the bosom of

the Almighty, whence they came. It is best to wait until he calls. It is best patiently to tarry until the soft hand of the gentlest of his ministers kindly leads to the hidden stair lapped by the eternal and still lipless wave. But if men, by their greed and their cowardice, make it impossible for man or woman to live, except at the price of the utter desecration and degradation of man or womanhood, then, O deathless mortal! fear not, but courageously shake the earthly dust from your feet and seek the 'open door.' It is the noblest, the only honourable way. But woe to the man or woman that shall compel you!"

Can one doubt the essential truth of these arguments? Who will question that, broadly and in the main, the thinker of these thoughts was right? Possibly at the root the idea is not entirely original. That we have had adumbrations of it before is certain. Not to go any wider afield, Wordsworth tells us that "the external world is fitted to the mind," that is, to the various powers of the brain, and the brain is, as Gœthe puts it, but the root of the man, his body and limbs being the stem and branches growing therefrom. Conversely we may say that the mind is fitted to the external world, not only the world in its physical aspects, but the world on the far elusive and yet ever present side which we designate spiritual.

Up to within a tolerably recent period man was so largely occupied with the task of subduing the earth, and bringing it to a condition of approximately peaceful habitation, that the part of his mind which relates to and fits him for the more physical side of things became too preponderant, indeed almost overwhelming in its force. During this time so fully was he occupied with his physical position and his material needs that he was able to give but little thought to the moral or spiritual side of things. Hence that side of his mind got but little chance.

As the followers of Darwin tell us, the law of the merely physical side of nature is one of "ruthless self-assertion," of the "thrusting aside or treading down all competitors," so that "her darling the strongest" may survive. How, and to what extent, that law prevailed, and still prevails, we have evidence in all history and on every side. Nevertheless, in course of time, and at an early period of his development, another law began to make itself felt; it was the law of his higher nature, of that part of his mental organisation which relates him to the less physical aspect of things, to that which appeals to him in the form of thought and emotion merely, which we designate ethic and esthetic, and which connect him by slender filaments of

sensation with the remotest depths of space, star-haunted and order-motioned.

At first these cerebral ganglions responded but dimly to the higher impulse. They were but small of growth, choked by the sturdier profusion and clamant activity of the baser elements of mind. Howbeit, dimly throbbing within him, occasionally breaking out in wild and vehement protest, these same faculties gradually began to tell as a power. Still it was long before they became anything like an ordered power. They remained subsidiary to and largely overwhelmed by the more physical members of the mental council. While these were trained, educated, disciplined almost to their fullest capacity, the complementary powers—those that fill out the complete man—were either wholly starved or fed on the crudest superstitions.

This was unavoidable when the natural state of man was one of war—when war grew out of and fed the faculty that loved it. Indeed, it may be said that only when broad swathes of peace were possible did man begin to cultivate the higher side of his nature; or, we might say, when it became the business of a section of the community only to do the fighting, leaving to others those avocations of peace which favour the speedier and more generous growth of the ethic and esthetic feelings. And in proportion

as peace has become the more general condition of society has that higher and better nature grown, and with it, of course, the law that checks the principle of selection in its more purely physical aspect.

The truth is therefore that in man there are two opposing principles at work, just as in the cosmos we meet with the centripetal and centrifugal forces. One is the law of physical selection, the other the law of moral perfection. The latter is a principle which grows out of the former, and is related to it, inasmuch as it is based on a physical condition. But united though it thus be in its physical base, its purpose is to counteract the rigour of the physical law, and so to perfect the lower animal man by the superaddition of a moral and spiritual beauty. Or, as we have it put by Professor Huxley: "Social progress means a checking of the cosmic process at every step and the substitution for it of another, which may be called the ethical process; the end of which is not the survival of those who happen to be the fittest, in respect of all the conditions which obtain, but of those who are ethically the best."[1]

"The practice of that which is ethically best (the same writer goes on to say)—what we call goodness or virtue—involves a course of conduct

[1] "Evolution and Ethics," p. 81.

which, in all respects, is opposed to that which leads to success in the cosmic struggle for existence. In place of ruthless self-assertion it demands restraint; in place of thrusting aside, or treading down all competitors, it requires that the individual shall not merely respect, but shall help, his fellows; its influence is directed, not so much to the survival of the fittest as to the fitting of as many as possible to survive. It demands that each man that enters the enjoyment of the advantages of a polity shall be mindful of his debt to those who have laboriously constructed it; and shall take heed that no act of his weakens the fabric in which he has been permitted to live."[1]

This is a noble use of science, and one which the capitalist may well take into consideration.

As in the past the narrow theories of political economy were seized hold of the more completely to subjugate the worker, so now the doctrine of the survival of the fittest has become a favourite weapon in the hands of the Mammonites. If the reformer points to the wide-spread misery existing at the base of society; if he points to the unequal distribution of wealth, to the laws which favour capital as against labour, to the "cut-throat" competition which sinks to the verge of starvation more than a third of the population of our

[1] "Evolution and Ethics," p. 82.

large cities, what is the answer we get from the capitalist? When some humane person, driven almost to despair of his kind by the suffering and deprivation he sees everywhere amongst the workers, what says the dry-as-dust scribbler on political economy? He points to Darwin and the survival of the fittest.

Those who gravitate to the base of society, he argues, are the weakest, the unfittest to survive, and must therefore go to the wall. According to his way of looking at the doctrine, universal competition is the primal order of nature, and cannot be done away with; and hence any commiseration for those who suffer from it is a waste of energy. But this same individual, capitalist or capitalist supporter, will be the first to advocate laws that bar the operation of the law of competition, that protect classes and interests from its full effects, and so cause it to tell with greater force and vehemence against those not so defended.

If the land and those who hold it, and assume a special and peculiar status because they so hold it—if these were not protected by a double vallum of privilege from the effects of free competition, how many generations would it take to sweep them completely from the field? Hardly three, one opines. And do we not see the same barriers in force against the full influence of the

law of survival in the continued existence of institutions that are no longer in keeping with the spirit of the age, and that, cumbering the soil, prevent the upgrowth and spread of better things? Yet the class of people who are thus protected from the law of competition—and who, it will be found, are the slowest to come under the influence of the law of ethical perfection—these are the first to point at the social detritus of the towns and villages as a residuum unfit for anything except to serve them and minister to their baser wants.

However, we are coming slowly and by degrees to a broader and deeper biology, to a truer psychology, to a nobler science of social economics; and the more surely we advance in these departments of knowledge, the more certainly shall we, ere long, find the only secure basis of a true humanity in the recognition of that "covenant" which, as above shown, is implanted in the "flesh for an everlasting covenant."

CHAPTER XIII

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge."

The world is afraid of this new idea, this new demand, which has taken hold of the peoples. Those who have grown up under the old régime—the régime of class prejudice and class distinctions—are afraid of it because they see in it the death-blow to their pretensions and to their obsolescent social tyranny. They are afraid of it, and they meet it with the frightened man's weapons, with the weak man's arguments. They cannot be just to it. But they might as well. The new thing has come to abide with us, and has in consequence to be reckoned with. For better or for worse the new movement is revolutionising the world. Everywhere you turn your eyes it is to be seen at work. It seems to creep slowly, to have many repulses, to suffer many sets back; but it still flows on with sure and inevitable sweep. Nothing can stop it. Count the strongholds it has taken since it began to be clamorous after the first harrowing shock of the French Revolution was over.

Look at those it is now assailing. They appear formidable enough; they seem indeed

impregnable. But the ever-lapping and ever-licking water will in the end undermine any structure, however strongly it may be built. And the workers—"the people," as we commonly describe them—are like the waves of the sea for multitude, and for the persistency of their thought, and thought breeds effort. Before their steady and unceasing onslaught, these apparently impregnable fortresses of belated custom and age-crusted wrong will crumble to pieces, as others have done bit by bit, until nothing is left but a memory. Yes, this will be, let the people of privilege and class distinction gird and rail as they will, and call upon all the gods, but especially that of their first and chiefest worship, Mammon.

For, naturally, to them this new thing appears ungodly. Yet—notwithstanding many ugly features—it is working in God's way. It is putting down the mighty and exalting the humble and the weak; and we may with assurance predict that it will continue to do so, provided the workers be wise and diligent in the use of the weapon that is now in their good right hands.

That weapon is not the martial one. The victory they seek is not to be won by the physical arm. No, good people, your salvation does not lie in the way of murder. There has been enough of that in the world—enough and to

spare. Moreover, there is no remedy in it. The conquest won by the iron hand is held by the iron hoof, and is of the brute, brutal. That is its law: and it remains such so long as continuance roots it in the mind. But the conquest you seek is one based on a created frame of mind, on a seed sown and developed in the hearts and brains of men—the sentiment of justice, the feeling of brotherhood.

Man's mental constitution is as wide and as carefully fitted to his position and surroundings as his physical organisation; but so long has he been turned from his true course, from his natural life, by a partial and one-sided organisation of society, that the balance of the mental council has become warped and dwarfed. With one section of society the care for daily bread has become so excessive that it tyrannises over and in the end wellnigh kills other needs. How can such a one take thought of the draughts of beauty that are as necessary for his complete well-being as bread? How can such a one look freely and gladly up to heaven when his gaze is kept riveted so fast to the earth, whence his miserable sustenance comes?

And are the other sections of society any more truly furnished as regards their minds? With how many is the whole time, from youth to age, spent in devising means or carrying out plans for

the continued subjection of the toiling masses? Their aim is not justice; it is not the happiness of others; it is not to find and follow any divine intent in the world; it is to make life as pleasant as they can for themselves, no matter what the cost may be to others. Can the mental council in these men grow to what it should be? They are in truth as much starved in soul, though in another way, as their more unfortunate brethren.

The great thing for the workers to bear in mind is that they will make headway in their conquest in proportion as they fill up and strengthen this mental council—in proportion as they make themselves the fuller and the truer men.

Let your laurels, therefore, O workers, be sullied by no sword work! Leave dynamite to the blind and ferocious, and all such chemical weapons and bloodshed to those who would degrade themselves to the level of murder. Your empire must be founded on a plane above all that; and there is an alchemy to your hands more potent and far surer than all those lethal instrumentalities and abominations. Call it the philosopher's stone if you will; for though it will not transmute dross into gold, it will do what is better and nobler. It will convert chaos into order, poverty into riches, misery into beauty and content, evil into good.

That alchemy lies in education. Yes, O

millions! million-handed to work, million-headed to think! the task for you is to educate yourselves. You do not need the education of bookworms, nor the education that will make you clever instruments merely. That obtain and use if need be. But what you chiefly require is the larger education that differentiates a mob from a body-politic, a mass of particles from a concrete organism. That for one thing: but over and above all, you need to bear constantly in view the difference between a system of cramming that sterilises and stereotypes the mind, and a system whereby the mind is fed and so encouraged to fuller growth and development. Do not educate yourself, or allow your children to be educated, in a rut, like the parson; but remember that you are the "heirs of all the ages," entitled to your share of their wealth of knowledge, and the power that comes of it—a wealth that is at the command of most through the public libraries —and in the cheap editions of books, many of them, be it remembered, to be had at the price of a day's beer or a week's supply of tobacco.

Do not be satisfied with the novels with which the public libraries are so deluged. You will get more intellectual litter than true literature in them. A few there be that are good, but for the most part they are such as will prove emotional Delilahs to rob you of mental grit and

vigour. They may be good for the idle, but not for you. Touch them, therefore, but rarely, and then only the best. What you need are the real things in books—the things that reveal to you what the world is, what man is and has been. These are the Scriptures that really open men's eyes and introduce them to the magnificent inheritance which is theirs, ready for the taking, ready for the enjoying, a feast that has been preparing for them, under the hand of the Master, by the masters, from old time.

In short, what you need to acquire, O workers! is the education that gives you the power to think, to originate, the talent to discriminate the true from the false, and, in addition thereto, the ability to organise yourselves, so as to be, or to produce, your own leaders and spokesmen, with the gifts of statesmen and diplomatists. You need too to educate and train your own teachers. Did it never occur to you that, by the present system of education, the men who are trained to be your teachers and guides — especially your guides spiritual—invariably end by being against you? Send a working man's son to one of the leading universities, and, though he may go with large-minded sympathies for his class, he will in nine cases out of ten be weakened down, narrowed in heart and brain, by the glamour of wealth and fashion, by the prevailing cynicism, which dis-

counts enthusiasm, and by the traditions of erudition as against practical life and experience. You, as workers, need teachers and professors of your own, that is, on the subjects that specially affect your position and welfare, trained in your own university — that of the world is the best. It would, indeed, pay you to have specialists in different departments travelling and collecting information on subjects connected with labour, and giving the results in lectures and in the public press.

Only in some such way will you make your cause good. You have fought in the past for freedom and the rights of labour; but you have too often been deceived by others. You trusted them because of their superior knowledge, and they deceived you for their own ends. They led you to believe that your cause was their cause; but in truth your cause was only their cause so long as it gave them strength to gain what they wanted themselves. That secured, what did they care for you?

You thought that a man with a glib tongue, a good coat, and money in his pocket could not fail to be as good as his word, and that your interests were safe in his hands. And though you have been hoodwinked and deceived again and again, you are hardly yet convinced of the truth that if you want your work done well you must do

it yourselves. It is not enough to say you want this and that done, and then leave it for some one else to do in his own way, at his own time, and with just as much watering down as will best serve his own ends. You must not only know precisely what you would have, but you must study in how far and by what means it is procurable. Nor is that all, for you must also inquire whether it can be had without injustice to others.

In order to do all this, and to do it properly, the worker needs to be well abreast of all the science and even of the higher criticism of the time. What more needful, therefore, than that he should be sure of his guides? For if they are not with him, they are against him. There is a vast deal of so-called history and science, not to mention theology, that is no better than so much cobwebbery, spun by fat spiders in the pay of Mammon, with intent to deceive. They would put you off on a wrong scent, delude you with empty theories and false ideals. When their facts are weak or *non est*, they will try to dazzle and cajole you with a splendid jugglery of words.

Especially should the worker have his eye on political economy. In the past it has done him great disservice: the early part of the century saw it help to rivet upon him the bonds of an industrial serfdom. No wonder, then, if in his

eyes it has become suspect. But not for that reason should he ignore it. In the hands of men like Adam Smith, its first great exponent, it was the means of doing much good, opening the eyes of the nations to many follies. Unfortunately others, following in his wake, spoke and wrote as though this science, "still almost in its infancy,"[1] were an assured gospel, beyond all doubt or question; and by treating "labour as a commodity without staying to throw themselves into the point of view of the workman; and without dwelling upon the allowances for his human passions, his instincts and habits, his sympathies and antipathies, his class jealousies and class adhesiveness,"[2] did a vast deal of harm.

The day of this sort of thing, however, has long gone by, never to return. To John Stuart Mill is given the credit of having humanised political economy. His noble lead has been followed by others, with the result, as Professor Marshall remarks,[3] that "the human as distinguished from the mechanical element is taking a more and more prominent place in economics." Wealth is still the main object about which the science turns, but the general well-being is not overlooked. It is no longer possible to barter and bargain away the human soul, with all its

[1] Professor Marshall in "Principles of Economics."
[2] *Ibid.* [3] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

infinite yearnings, like so much coal or so many sacks of wheat—so much as it requires to stoke and stable the worker and his family for a week, to so much is he entitled for the work that can be got out of him, and no more.

It will be seen how far the science of economics has travelled since that was the accepted doctrine if we turn to one of our leading economist's estimate of what are the necessaries for the efficiency of an ordinary agricultural or of an unskilled labourer and his family, in England, in this generation. "They may be said to consist," says Professor Marshall, "of a well-drained dwelling with several rooms, warm clothing, with some changes of underclothing, pure water, a plentiful supply of cereal food, with a moderate allowance of meat and milk, and a little tea, etc., some education and some recreation, and lastly, sufficient freedom for his wife from other work to enable her to perform her maternal and her household duties." The writer adds that, "If in any district unskilled labour is deprived of any of these things, its efficiency will suffer in the same way as that of a horse that is not properly tended, or a steam-engine that has an inadequate supply of coals."

It will be said that this is but the expression of a pious opinion, very far from the disgraceful conditions obtaining; but the fact remains that it is the recorded opinion of a recognised authority,

whose views are accepted and taught in our highest institutions of learning, and must gradually come to be the received doctrine in regard to the matter in question.

The workers will do well, therefore, not to neglect the study of political economy, or social economics, as it is coming more properly to be called. But do not, you whom it so largely concerns—do not be deluded by it into false courses. Appraise the facts for yourselves, and never go a jot beyond the point whereto they lead. Directly you are launched from the facts on to a theory, rein up. A wise man never travels far on the back of a theory. Remember the treatises on political economy are mostly written by men who, though not exactly in the pay of the classes, are very largely in sympathy with them and their ideals. Hence they are suspect. For how can the man who is hand and glove with the rich avoid letting his little ass of theory trot by the side of the patron's carriage. He may be never so honest, never so disinterested, but the loadstone of class—small though it may appear—will tell. We all know how large a deviation from a straight course an infinitesimally slight cant in a wheel will occasion.

How inevitably the bias makes itself felt is shown in the fact remarked by Kidd,[1] that "in

[1] "Social Evolution," p. 251.

England during the nineteenth century the educated classes, in almost all the great political changes that have been effected, have taken the side of the party afterwards admitted to have been in the wrong,—they have almost invariably opposed at the time the measures they have subsequently come to defend and justify."

This circumstance is the more striking when it is considered how much political economy was invoked on their side, and how, up even to our own time, the worker was regarded as nothing but a wealth-producer, a commodity—a little more than your ass, a little less than your horse. At its dictates he was ousted from the soil—to make way for large farms, north of the Tweed to give place to sheep, to make room for deer. It was not political economy that first raised its voice against the degradation of women in mines, against the enslavement of children in factories, against their demoralisation in brick-fields, in canal boats, in agricultural gangs; and to-day it is in favour of the continued employment of the young as half-timers; that is, it advocates the putting of the young to work before they are fully instructed as they should be—and this for fear lest some other country should be able to sell something cheaper than we can.

A true science of social economy will regard the healthy, happy, and contented worker as a

country's chief wealth, and an idle, luxurious class as its greatest evil, because it makes for disunity and therefore for weakness. The ideal of the true worker will ever be to make and keep himself independent, that is, able to command a sufficient livelihood without submitting to any degrading conditions, and by that means to lay by enough for a comfortable old age.

The ideal of the non-worker is the very opposite of this. It is to draw the overplus of the worker's earnings, or the result of his labour, less the scanty deduction necessary for his keep, into his own pocket, and so to hold the wealth-producer in subjection.

The man, however, who has learned his true place in nature, and to know his real value and the exact measure of his power, cannot be so degraded and enslaved, except with his knowledge and acquiescence. What we know as evil all men have to suffer in one way or another: it is part of the birthright which they must accept along with the good; but it is very largely a man's own fault if he suffers more than a fair share of that evil.

For what we know as evil is a necessary concomitant of the state in which man finds himself. His life is bound up with that of a planet every law of whose existence makes for change, makes for possible decay, at the same time that it makes

also for possible advance. The very circumstance that there is no iron stability, no invariableness of condition, is a factor working for progress towards a higher perfection; but it is also a factor that makes the reverse equally possible, namely, a descent towards a less perfect condition, or, in other words, towards greater evil.

The earth—to confine illustration to our fixed abiding-place—is in a transition state. Science shows it to have gradually developed from an intricate mass of warring elements into a condition in which life in its lower and more rudimentary stages became possible. Then, step by step, perfecter and more complicated forms were evolved, working up through snake and lizard to bird, through monkey and ape to man, the latter in turn rising from lower to higher, shaping and carving his upward way by an age-long struggle against fang and tooth and claw, sharpening his wits in the process, but developing also an amount of energy and cunning that made him in course of time the capsheaf of created things. He cleared the earth of its monsters, or did his share towards it, succeeding more, of course, by his invincible courage and his far-reaching intelligence than by strength alone. Indeed, in the long war with the various forms of beast—tooth and claw, insidious poison

and cunning lair—there was nothing that he did not make his own and, if need were, better the instruction.

Thus, in his contest with the evil by which he was surrounded—with savage material nature on the one hand and the ravening beast on the other—man developed so enormous an overplus of the self-protecting faculties and domineering powers that they in turn became an added evil. They became even masterful over himself, obscuring often, and warring against, his better nature, causing him even to be devilish towards his kind, his excess of uncontrollable desire a devil even to himself—the worst devil we know.

Thus was it that the evil without made necessary an evil within; and so it came about that man was surrounded and encompassed with evil—encompassed within and without. Nevertheless, deprived of this condition of evil—evil in cold and hunger and in lurking death, evil in his own enormous propensity to build up and protect himself, even at the expense of others—man could not have grown to what he is. He would have remained stagnant in some lower form of being, even if he had not long since been entirely gulped up and obliterated by some larger mouth.

Thus out of the evil conditions of nature come good, come growth to higher forms, to better things. For though the evil is ever present,

ever powerful, ever dragging down, as it were, from angel to beast, yet stronger than that downward path, more vital than the ever-present inertia of the brute, is the deep underlying and unconquerable love of conquest, which is perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of mortal man. It is deeper than love, more undying than hate.

Hence, though this overplus of evil, this tendency to revert to the lower types through which man has passed in his upward way, this constant temptation to evade the law of remuneration—of the lesser for the greater good—this ever-present alluring of the lower insidious forms of propensity and passion, is for ever at work checking the advance; yet along with it for ever goes the consciousness that the descent is a failure, and the passion that will not be content with defeat.

And so the battle goes on—the warfare betwixt the good that incites and the evil that tempts—between devil on the one side and angel on the other, both throned in one being, and warring ever the one against the other.

The trend—notwithstanding the weight and vigour of the evil—is, nevertheless, for ever upward. When that stops and life, as it were, stands still, then the end will not be far distant. Sometimes the march seems backward, or at

least not forward. Perhaps it is but a halt for bearings, to dress, as it were, for a fresh start. Anyhow, ere long, another advance is seen. Another stronghold of evil—or of the devil, as we prefer to put it in the concrete—is won, and the basis of humane life broadened and cleansed.

What is it that decides the balance, that gives the upward lift, the leaning on the whole towards steady onward progression? For that has been the slow but sure tendency through the ages. When evil was enormously preponderant, when all the conditions were of the brute brutal, there was still in the midst of the tangle a something that wrought for the upward march, as though there were an invisible spiral that must be followed; and along this way, despite many a stay in the course and many a backward roll, the march of humanity ceaselessly jogged.

Has that marvellous impulse all been from within? Or does it owe something to influences from beyond the earthly sphere? Is it unreasonable to suspect a something beating upon human consciousness from the illimitable regions of ether-filled space, some larger air, some purer breath, that, borne like sunlight, like heat, like electrical disturbance, upon the ever-throbbing waves of that immeasurable sea, is able to act upon the supersensuous margin of consciousness

which we call soul, and spur it to still higher and purer efforts of living?

The scientist is apt to say no. But science should be humble, and wait for evidence where none has been vouchsafed it. We know that light, heat, electricity come to us from extra-terrestrial sources: may there not be similar founts of intellectual or spiritual stimulus? The entire limitless universe is bound together by chains of interdependence, the one part feeding and sustaining the other by all manner of subtle and undefinable influences; and wherefore not by such as we name spiritual? One thing is certain: the man who assiduously prepares himself for the reception finds himself reinforced, according to his need, by spiritual strength; and it is education in that strength which the masses require to-day more than almost anything else. That, and to cure themselves of "that strange abnormality," as a thoughtful writer puts it,[1] "that extraordinary and vital defect in their—*i.e.* the English—character, the absence of the emotional, of the imaginative, and of the love of the beautiful, and which amounts, in fact, to nothing less than the divorce of soul from our national life."

These things they would do well to bear constantly in mind in educating themselves for the contest that is before them; remembering what

[1] J. G. Speed in "The Education of Man."

Wordsworth once wrote to a people fighting a lonely fight for emancipation :—

> "Thou hast at thy side
> Powers that will work for thee : earth, air, and skies ;
> There's not a breathing of the common wind
> That will forget thee : Thou hast great allies.
> Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
> And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

Ay, and he might have added death, and moon and stars, and the broad illimitable ether, that, as it conveys light to the eye, and warmth and vigour to the blood, brings also, with that larger knowledge of the divinely-ordered whole, which acts as an impulse and an inspiration towards its higher perfections, fructifying measures of strength and endurance to the soul that cannot and will not be satisfied with mere earthly food and mortal and temporal gratifications.

CHAPTER XIV

"Blessed is the man who hath his quiver full!"

THERE is still another respect in which the workers need to educate themselves, and to educate their children. They need to train themselves to the exercise of wisdom in regard to their sexual instincts. The toiler is in this respect too much like the brute beasts, following a blind impulse only. He is too apt to think of nothing but the gratification of his lust, giving little or no thought to the offspring that must come, that will have to be fed, clothed, and otherwise cared for. When they do come there is nothing to show that the worker is less affectionate to them than his superiors in the golden scale. But since they depend so much for their maintenance and right training upon his earnings, he ought to practice more restraint.

The census of 1891 presents us with some appalling object-lessons touching this question. We gather therefrom the astonishing fact that in our midst there then existed some 28,000 wives and 169 widows, all aged fifteen, and all of the poorest class. Can we doubt, with such facts staring us in the face, that the present evil state

of things does not come altogether from Dives, but is largely the fault of Lazarus himself. The former personage has quite enough sins of his own to answer for; it would be hard indeed if he were in addition to be made responsible for the miseries that are purely self-inflicted by Lazarus himself. Lazarus errs through ignorance, perhaps; but none the less true is it that he overstocks the labour market, and himself largely discounts his chance of better ways and a worthier outlook by his inability or his unwillingness to be guided by what he sees around him, and to take his thoughts a few years ahead.

If, too, it be cruel to flood the world with a pauper, or well-nigh pauper progeny, it is doubly cruel when that progeny comes of immature parents, because such progeny cannot be endowed with the requisite physical and moral stamina wherewith to fight the battle of life. The evil comes very largely from the imperfect education which, with all the money spent upon it, is still given to the young, and from the haste wherewith they are forced, at an immature age, into factories and workshops. Something of the evil is due also to the belated teaching of the church that "children and the fruit of the womb are of the Lord." That may have been the case in patriarchal times, when the earth was still "the Lord's and the fulness thereof"; but

in these days, when the "Lord" has been ousted by the "landlord," the dictum wants re-editing.

It is a jibe often thrown into the teeth of the giant Demos that he knows no restraint, that he begets families far beyond his power to maintain and keep in decent housing and apparel. That he does so is as much the fault of his betters, who were ever eager for sword-food, as his own. Yet, though the accusation is but too true, the fact attests his virtue as well as his improvidence. He unfortunately too often marries early because he is taught to confine his lusts within the marriage vow. He is not always chaste, but, man for man, there will be found more honesty and fidelity in this respect among the workers than amongst their so-called betters. For one thing it happens to be so because a young fellow of the humbler classes remains as a rule under the paternal roof, and so under paternal influence, until he weds. It is very different with the young male of the wealthy classes, amongst whom there is a social convention by which it is tacitly understood and agreed that it is better for young men to have a little latitude allowed them to sow their "wild oats," than that they should marry too early, or too poor. The thing is universally understood, and very generally winked at by the easy-going classes.

There is another very potent reason for the

large families of the toiling poor. It is a grim but none the less a very saddening one. A Norfolk woman, the wife of an agricultural labourer, and the mother of nine children, made confession of the fact. She had been complaining of the number of mouths there were to fill and backs to clothe, and the little wherewithal to do either. "Yes," said her lady visitor, "but you know where they come from? Why do you have so many?" "Well, you see, ma'am, there is so little pleasure or comfort in life, and on winter nights we's often neither light nor fire, and so must needs go to bed to keep us warm—an' I s'ppose that's how 'tis." What a philosophy is there! "So little pleasure or comfort in life, ma'am—an' that's how 'tis!"

As regards avoiding too early marriages, the democracy would do well to take a lesson from those above them, not, however, in the way of "wild oats." Here is where they will have to apply the first-fruits of their newly-acquired wisdom. The overwhelming abundance of children is inimical to their best interests. They will have to make the mouths fewer; and in order to do so they have only to apply the principle to the family which they have already learned to bring to bear with such success in trade. They must "reduce the output." The wisdom of that principle of restraint is as apparent in the social as in

the material world. Overstock the market and you reduce prices. Extract too much coal, and the wages of the miners must go down. Produce children at the rate of eight or ten to the family, and you overstock the market with hands. And when there are three to do the work of one, the capitalist can have labour practically at his own price. If that price be a starvation one, it makes no matter to him. A man *quâ* man may have bowels of compassion, but a man *quâ* capitalist indulges in no such luxury.

The democracy, therefore, must put away the notion that children are unqualified blessings. They may be blessings—in moderation. But the man who at this time of day asserts, or acts on the belief, that a numerous progeny is a blessing, especially to a poor man, deserves to be set to picking oakum, or put into a strait waistcoat. There is hardly a feebler doctrine afloat than that. Moreover, it is not only feeble, it is little less than criminal. It may be very pleasant to have little ones about the house, to be cheered by their charming ways, and to be cheated out of our cares by their smiles, to be elevated by their innocence; but the man who cannot carry his mind forward into the years when those innocent prattlers will be pale-faced, hollow-eyed youths and maidens, standing in the market-places of the world, and bartering their lives for the price

of semi-starvation at the hands of bowelless capitalists, who heartlessly make capital out of soul and sinew, is not worthy the name of father, and does little honour to that of husband.

Moreover, do we not know that the children of the worker are the most likely to be left orphans, and destitute? The blessing that was is then apt to become a curse—to the children. For we know also, despite our beautiful philosophies and Christian theories, that the world does not look upon destitute children as blessings. At least one would not think so to see the life in our streets and workhouses.

Look at what the administration of the poor-law was for generations—and is to a large extent yet—a disgrace to a civilised community; and in this system the young and innocent are involved with the rest. The tests and terrors that were formerly set up for the idle and vicious were applied also to the young and to the victims of social conditions that were too hard for them. They were lumped without discrimination with the residuum, the riff-raff, the half-imbecile, the morally and physically disordered. Social conditions and conditions of labour are such that a large proportion of the working-classes must inevitably succumb—must be killed off before their time or else become a burden on the rates. In the former case the outcome is the happier for

the worker, but the outlook for his children is, or was, a thing to make angels weep. Something has been done of late years to amend this state of things, but much still remains to be done.

Perhaps one day we may come to see that those who have amassed large fortunes through the exploitation of labour are specially indebted to the community for the social failures they have helped to make. When a community by its industry, and by the wants thus created, gives a value to land which would otherwise have remained wilderness, that enhanced value does not rightfully belong to the man who, though nominally owning it, did nothing of himself to raise it from its wild state. Though he may be entitled to some part of the increment, the greater share thereof undoubtedly belongs to those whose united industry and common needs so greatly enhanced its value. Of late years thinkers, and to some extent legislators, have come more and more to recognise the justice of this principle as applied to land. Why not, therefore, as applied to the community?

A man, whether as the nominal owner of the land upon which a town is built, or as the purveyor for the needs of the community, either in the manufacturing or commercial capacity, accumulates a large fortune, owes something of that increase to the community, and especially

to those individuals of it by whose industry its acquisition has been made possible. In other words, there is an unearned increment in fortunes which does not of right belong wholly to the holders, but, as one may say, to the community by which its accumulation was made possible; for when capital reaches the stage of investment its multiplication and reduplication depend on the orderliness, activity, and productiveness of that community. In the case of agricultural land the owner is held bound to make allowance for the unearned increment: why not in the case of the community likewise?

The health and strength of the united units forming the community constitute its productive force; if, therefore, as in the case of bad agriculture, everything possible is taken out of it, and nothing returned, the community suffers. Hence the justness of the claim that the larger fortunes should pay back something of their unearned increase, and that the amount should be appropriated as a provision for the aged, the prematurely incapacitated, and the orphans of workers.

By such means the workers would receive something of the residue of wage owing to them which it was not possible to pay while capital was working capital merely, but which certainly can be afforded when it becomes investment, and is earning a further profit, from

no inherent virtue in itself, but simply because of the needs and activity of the combined members of the community.

A tacit acknowledgment of some such indebtedness of wealth as this has ever been in evidence in most civilised countries in the benefactions that have been made, and the legacies left by prosperous men for purposes useful to the community, such as the endowment of schools for poor children, the erection of alms-houses for the worn-out and aged, the building of hospitals, libraries, and the like, and the establishment of all sorts of institutions for the good generally of the more needy and deserving sections of society. In this way a great deal of the wealth that has been taken from the community, or accumulated through its instrumentality, finds its way back to it, though not by any means so much as ought, nor, probably so much as formerly did in proportion to wealth and population.

Perhaps the idea here set forth is not very well expressed. Howbeit, it is one that may be worth considering. Something more than his weekly wage is undoubtedly due to the diligent and orderly worker, who gives his labours to the community as the civil servant gives his to the State; and some sort of pension, or provision for old age, is as much due to the one when

too old to work, as to the other when ready for the enjoyment of a ripe old age.

This notion, however, is, by the way, and as a hint to you, soldier of toil, how you may make the study of political economy profitable. But the main thing is, and ever must be, to learn how to make the most of the powers and the strength you have. You possess brains enough. From your ranks have been produced men who have done some of the best work for the country in whatever branch we may like to name. You possess plenty of "go" when fairly well fed, and can "remove mountains" if you will: mountains of superincumbent and down-crushing oppression. But be wise, be satisfied with two or three children; feed them well; give them all the science they can hold, girls and boys alike; set them the example of being pure and righteous, and they shall go out and possess the world; not to live idly in it, and to trick themselves out in glittering metals and shining stones, but to be adorned with intelligence and moral strength.

Your demand must be the right to live a cleanly, honourable, and decent life. Let your motto be, "less labour and more thought." If you be resolute and keep a firm check on the animal within, you will be able to get all you want. But your resolutions will have to be of

the most unflinching kind — of the kind that will be ready to accept death rather than slavery.

Accept no man's blankets, no man's soup. Have naught to do with ladies who seek you out and pat your babes on the cheek when there is an election to the fore. Show them the door: they are not honest. Your honest friends are those who come every day. All these people aim at doing is to play the Jacob with you, as they have done in the past. Abhor the parson who comes to inquire after your soul while your body is ill-clad and your belly empty. Remember that the message of the nineteenth century is, in the words of M. de Lavelaye: "Thou shalt cease to be the slave of nobles and despots who oppress thee."

Another thing, take warning of Cassius, and do not put into your mouth that which steals away your brains, and with them your manhood and your independence. You surely learned in your unfledged youth how hard it is to catch even a little sparrow by putting salt on its tail, and yet you—you who are of more value than a hundred sparrows—allow yourselves to be taken by a little salt on your tongues and in your wames—by an extra pinch of salt in your glass of ale, which makes you as bondslaves, and sends to the House that for ever holds you from your

rights the beer-lords who pocket the millions that would pay for your battles and render you independent if stocking'd or put into labour and industrial banks.

This is no teetotal lecture; but the man who cannot take and leave when he has had enough, who, moreover, tamely allows a man to drug his drink[1] in order that he may get the deeper into his pocket, is not only an ill-educated, but a spiritless lump of humanity.

Go after the substantial: you are in a material world. Make what investments you like in a possible future state; but make sure first of a solid foundation here. You cannot build securely without that. The moral, the spiritual thrives only upon a solid base. The strongest and most towering natures, like the oak and the poplar, grip the earth the firmest. Everything is built on character—possibly even your place in whatever immortal state there may be; and out of material slavery, out of the semi-starvation that keeps the physical fires low, there can be no effectual growth of character.

Remember even the bishops do not place all their investments in heaven. They favour the three per cents. and the best railways. These, they know, mean a substantial heaven here. It

[1] By the recent committee of inquiry into the adulteration of foods it was reported that beer was scandalously over-salted.

is a good lead to follow, that of the bishops—in respect of earthly things, at any rate.

Have nothing to do with an organised religious system which accepts as its leading principles love to one another like that of brothers and sisters, parent and child, the doing to others as you would be done by, and that yet allows its professors and teachers to see you and your children sink into vice or starve, while they feed on the best, dress in the warmest, and lay up their treasures in this sordid realm of moths and thieves.

Have a religion of your own—and let the corner-stones of that spiritual temple be justice, justice, justice, and still justice. Let the steps to it, and the floor of it, consist of love one to another; and let the vault and towering dome of it be love to God. Give heavenward windows to faith and hope; but leave charity outside. There is something bastard and mean about that reputed virtue. With justice and brotherly love you do not need it. It has tended to degrade men and has become suspect. Once it may have been noble and fire-touched; but in course of time it has become whittled down and emasculate, till there is nothing more heroic about it than the dropping of a penny in your hat—or it may be a threepenny bit.

In short, it is in a true religious awakening

that lies the answer to all these perturbing questions that at present envelop the world in a cloud of doubt and dismay. The signs of it are already with us. They are seen in the growing seriousness of the workers, in their deepening earnestness. But this resurgent religion will be a different thing from what we have seen in the past. It will not be a religion divorced from all the practical wants and aims of life—a thing that can only dole out smooth words when miners' wives calmly resign themselves to starve in their bare cottages rather than have their husbands abandon a principle of right—rather than they should accept defeat in a question vital to their physical and moral well-being and that of their children.

It is in such heroism as this, becoming more and more manifest amongst the workers, that the hope and even the promise for the future lies. It is in such moral heroism, in such examples of obedience to ideas of right, in the intense desire that whatever comes the right will prevail, and the firm conviction that in the end the right—fought for aright—must and shall prevail, that we find the master-key for the solution of the problems that now weigh with the weight of fate on the minds of all just and far-seeing men.

Such a reawakening of practical religion—of

pity and humanity—working through the masses as it is doing, and will do more and more, is bound to conquer the world as surely as Christianity did. It is indeed the revitalising of Christianity, and the application of it to the needs of our everyday life, whether in the home or in the workshop, in the court or in the mart. It was destined to come sooner or later. With the struggle for a loftier ideal of life it was sure to leap into existence and mingle in the strife. The flame will mount higher and higher, the light burn brighter and keener. Nothing can stop it, unless, indeed, by some means a wave of utter degradation should overwhelm the world—which seems humanly almost impossible. And so once more the Church will become what it was in its best days, not merely a place in which people are preached at on Sundays, and where the poor are shamed by the finery of the rich, but at once school, inn, hospital, the common home.[1]

[1] I am indebted for this idea to Renan.

CHAPTER XV

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof."

When the multitudes have fully reflected upon their position, and have determined upon their course, they will enrol themselves in companies and regiments, and become soldiers, not soldiers of the old murderous type, but soldiers for the right and the truth, fighters for justice and humanity. They will need much drill and a great deal of careful discipline to fit them for the campaigning they will have to do. But first and chiefly they will be required to submit to a reduction of their baggage and camp-following to soldier-like proportions. As before said, the fewer the children to harass them on the march and to weaken their knees the better. For the women must be soldiers too in this warfare—true Amazons for the nonce, cutting off both breasts, if need be.

When the multitudes have thus resolved to enrol themselves and take up arms—the arms of wisdom and might—then, and not till then, will they begin to repossess the earth, and to re-enter into their forfeited birthright. It is a beautiful inheritance, and one well worth a little

discipline and restraint to enjoy. They are beginning to see that, these masses; but when they are thoroughly awake they will see it more clearly. They will then inquire how it happened that they were so completely dispossessed of their real inheritance, the land. They are only partially conscious of the fact as yet; but when they are once thoroughly aroused they will see that the country is very beautiful, and that it is also very fruitful. It is the Almighty's garden, upon which he exerts all his love and all his might. In other realms of his nature he manifests his power in other ways — in magnificent displays of his handiwork, in destruction, or apparent destruction, and renovation. But here, in what we call the country, it is all production, growth and multiplication, so careful is he for the nourishment and delight of his creatures.

Put seed into the ground, and it will grow—grow while you, O workers, are asleep—grow even while you are sick and ill, while you are tired and aweary, while you are sturdily fighting the dragon of capital. It breeds like the rich man's money. God breathes on the land and it produces; you, the masses, breathe on the rich man's gold, and it doubles and trebles itself. Between you and the Almighty, the classes—doing nothing but think and contrive how best still to keep you masses, burden-bearers—take

the whole of the world's produce, leaving you just sufficient to keep you as you are, burden-bearers.

If you had your portion of the country where God's good things grow, you could do without the wealth that man makes—the wealth unjustly gained from the sweat of your faces. Yes, in the country all the most precious things grow; while the town is at best but a place of toil and dissipation—a place where men gradually decay.

When the masses come to appreciate fully their position in regard to the land, and the manner in which they were dispossessed, they will be staggered at the folly of their fathers in the past—at their folly and the selfishness of others. They will see how, by continued blindness on one point, the people gradually became disinherited, how, step by step, they were juggled out of their joint-heirship in the land and its natural produce. Froude tells us in his "History of England," that "Land never was private property. . . . Duty to the State was at all times supposed to override private interest or inclination (vol. i. p. 11). The restrictions, both on masters and servants, were so severe as to prevent either from taking advantage of the necessities of the other, or from terminating through caprice or levity, or for any insufficient reason, a connection presumed to be permanent" (vol. i. p. 13).

Yet, because the State gradually came to be represented by one class, and that class stood up only for its own interests, and there being no sovereign after Elizabeth capable of holding the balance between the lower and the upper classes, this wise principle of action was allowed to be shelved, to the century-long disinheriting of the commons of England, and to the unrighteous enrichment of the power-holding class. Having first, as we have shown, swallowed up the yeoman class, they then set to work to despatch the poor cottager. The process was very much the same in the one case as the other. Knowing how much the poor depended upon the commons, and upon their bits of crofts and gardens, they first got an Act of Parliament to enclose the commons. They gave compensation at times. Yes, they gave compensation; but upon what a scale! Could, indeed, any compensation be sufficient for the practical expropriation they effected?

This method of what are known as the "landowners" has always been the same. Whenever they have seen a poor man in the enjoyment of a bit of freehold, if it were only a cottage and as much land as would contain its shadow, they have played the Naboth over it; and if it were gettable by hook or by crook, it was presently added to their possessions. In this respect their

hunger made them merciless. Whenever it was a question of taking from the poor, the aristocracy have ever shown themselves destitute of compassion—nay, destitute of the most elementary ideas of justice! They have never thought of the poor man's comfort, of the poor man's pleasure, of the poor man's right to manhood; they have thought only to gratify their own immense and insatiable greed. Is not the story of it written on every hillside, in every vale, in every stream? It is written also in the hearts of the people.

Take an instance. It was the writer's lot, as a youth, to live in the house of a poor widow with sons and daughters. Her husband had been a working printer, and, being in regular employment, and having besides the right of pasturage on the town-commons land, was well off.

"We sometimes had a cow on the common; sometimes we had a couple of pigs—always half-a-dozen geese and some poultry," said his widow. "At the worst of times we had a goose to kill at Martinmas, and one or two at Christmas. Then, it was very rarely that we had not a flitch of bacon or a ham hanging to the beam. But when the lord of the manor enclosed the commons that was all at an end. It seemed to make all the difference to us between poverty and riches when they were gone. After that we always seemed

to be in want and difficulties, and my husband had to work so much harder that in the end it killed him."

"But you got compensation," observed the writer, remembering the beautiful homilies that were in the school-books of the time about the Rich and the Poor, Capital and Labour, the beneficent providential arrangement of society into toilers and idlers, and the like. Beautiful homilies—beautiful lies!

But the writer did not know they were such then, and so thought he had answered the poor widow.

"Yes," said she, "we had compensation, it is true. But what was that? We should have been better without it."

"How much did you get?"

"Our share was twenty-five shillings!"

The writer does not know who that particular lord of the manor may have been, but there can be no doubt as to what he was. He was a robber of the poor! The democracy, however, ought to be thankful for one thing at least: he, with many others, his brethren, showed them the way. They got an Act of Parliament. The democracy has a long memory, and will remember and profit by that fact.

When the great landowners had reduced the poor to absolute poverty by taking away the

commons and every vestige of natural rights in the land upon which they were born, and upon which their fathers and forefathers had lived ere they were—they then said: "Now, we shall have to support these people by doles and poor-rates if we allow them to stay here. Let us drive them into the towns; the townsfolk can provide for them; they are of their set, and so it is their affair more than ours. We do not need them; we can turn our land into large farms, which can be tilled by machinery, and so employ as few people as possible. Then we and our game can enjoy the country, and the tradesfolk and the poor can have the towns." What they thus decided upon they did, and they were enabled to do it because they were of one mind.

But selfish people never see far beyond their own pockets. Hence, in taking the course they did towards the poor, the classes did not see that from the starving people of the towns there would arise a thought that would one day lead to their own overthrow. You may root out—kill—mutilate everything but a thought. While all lived as it were together, part of one whole, and sympathising one with another as mutually fitting members of one body, then the poor, seeing the aristocrat daily, even as they saw the sun and moon and the stars, conceived that, like them, he was a part of the order of nature. But

when, forcibly ejected from the country, they came to herd in towns, and saw less and less of these lords, they no longer regarded them as part and parcel of that order, but the reverse. They learned that, though they never saw these so-called noblemen, and received nothing from them, they yet had to pay a tax to them, and that, because of that tax, they could not have house-room enough for the healthy growth of either body or soul. They found, in short, that men were living under the anomaly that, whereas a piece of land that would be worthless except as a breeding-place for frogs, and had no value beyond what was put into it by man's industry, was yet taxed by a man who had done nothing to enhance its value, and could not add one iota thereto if he tried. In other words, this man was allowed to tax other men's industry—to live and thrive, and get enormously rich out of other men's blood, and bone, and wit,—that, in short, like the old-fashioned slave, every man must pay to him first-fruits of all his labour.

Thus, with the only source of natural production at his back, with money and other wealth at his beck and call, the landholder became the capitalist, while the worker, with no resource but his strength and cunning, fell more and more under the power of the monopolist, until he began to organise and to act as the bundle of

sticks in the fable by forming those trade-unions which, in their "brilliant though chequered career," have "been more full of interest and instruction than almost anything else in English history."[1]

The capitalist tried hard to prevent this coalescence and co-operation: he wanted still to be able to deal with the worker stick by stick, and so to be in the position at any time to break him on his knee. And when he could not do that he endeavoured to gain his end by appealing to the worker's patriotism, or rather to rouse public prejudice by appealing to the patriotic instinct.

We see the same thing going on to-day. If a section of workers strike for higher pay, shorter hours, or any other advantage, we at once hear the outcry—"Driving trade from the country." Yet no single act or movement that can be named has done more in the direction of diverting trade from these shores than the action of the power-holders in monopolising the land, unless it be the short-sighted policy of the railway monopolists in favouring the foreigner as against the home-producer.

Not only have they been the means of putting millions a year into the pockets of the foreigner for produce that could as well have been grown here, thereby giving work to tens of thousands of

[1] "Principles of Economics," by Alfred Marshall.

labouring men and women, and at the same time enriching the holders of the land, who are now so shamelessly squealing—there is no fitter word for it—about their depreciated rents and asking that the people they formerly robbed should be taxed for their support. Not only have they done this, but they have deprived the State of a large revenue which it would otherwise have enjoyed, and to which it was justly entitled. What that might have been may be gathered in part from the fact, given by Mr Gladstone, that the annual assessment of the land in France during the present century has increased from £40,000,000 to £140,000,000, solely as the result of the division of the land into small holdings.

We see here and there the faint beginnings of wisdom in regard to this expropriation of the toilers from the land. Here and there we see a larger-minded landowner inviting the worker to return to the soil, and so to help increase the wealth and happiness of the country. Earl Carrington's scheme in South Lincolnshire is an instance in point. Under the direction of a small syndicate 250 acres of land have been let in a hundred holdings, and after three years' experience the syndicate express themselves perfectly satisfied with the success of their venture, and their readiness to extend operations. A new feature was introduced during the past year by dividing

up the grass land, the result being nine holdings on the farm of pasture land.

By this reasonable arrangement labouring men are enabled to secure enough land to make it worth their while to devote themselves to cultivation, and at the same time to keep a cow.

This is only one of the numberless efforts that have of late years been made to give the labourer some sort of grip upon the land. Parliament has repeatedly taken the subject up, but for the most part in a half-hearted, ineffectual way. Since the earliest Allotment Act in 1815 until the latest in 1890, there has been a steady growth in the number of these patchment holdings, the increase between 1873 and 1890 being upwards of 200,000 allotments. The clause in the Parish Councils' Act relating to allotments has greatly aided the movement; and the Small Holdings' Bill of Mr Jesse Collings is a further step in the same direction, doing on a small scale for England what the Ashbourne Act had already done for Ireland.

But when all is said and done, the result is a miserable one, and says little for British statesmanship. To look at the treatment this subject has received at the hands of legislators during the last thirty years, one would think them all small farmers with parish minds and hearts no bigger than the small change in their pockets. There is everywhere visible the fear lest the labourer

should, by being able to do anything for himself, develop a spark of independence; and so the amount of allotment allowed him is of the meagrest description, and it is burdened with every possible drawback.

Anyone who has gone much about the country will have been struck with the patchwork-like enclosures here and there on the outskirts of villages, and generally not much larger than an old-fashioned quilt. Not unfrequently they will be found to be fully a mile from the labourers' homes, and instances occur where they are considerably more than that. In many cases that have come under the writer's own notice, the worst land in the parish has been chosen for such allotments, and the labourer has been charged treble the price per acre paid by the farmers of the district.[1] But, of course, it is long since the labourer ceased to be anybody's neighbour.

However, signs of improvement in this respect are not wanting. Larger views are beginning to prevail. Economic science is already recognising that "the poverty of the poor is the chief cause of that weakness and efficiency which are the causes of their poverty";[2] and this fact lends a special interest to the work of later investigators

[1] This was notably the case in one district of Northamptonshire.
[2] "Principles of Economics."

in this line of research. We shall not get far into the coming century before legislators will perceive the wise course to be a frank avowal of error in the past, and such a dealing with the land question as to make it possible for a considerable proportion of workers to become freeholders.

In any case, the democracy have it in their power to help themselves in this respect. More and more land is coming, and will still come, into the market, even without the adoption of any such scheme as that of the Land Nationalisation Society, or the Land Restoration League; and if the workers hold solidly together and use their means and their credit to the best advantage, they will be able to secure small freeholds for themselves out of the wreck of the great estates. These—thanks to the "common men" whose wit and perseverance contrived the means and appliances to bring produce from far continents to undersell the fruits of the landlord's land—these are crumbling to bits, and will disintegrate the faster when the workers, using the power that is in their hands, resolve to have equitable laws touching the soil, and especially to do away with primogeniture and entail.

It will be a pity, some will opine, to see the old families go. But they will not go. What is in them of good and fitting will, as we know,

survive. What is not good and fitting—do we not know, on the authority of science, that nature has no use for it? In so far as the "old families" have created a false ideal, and lived according to that ideal, they have done evil, and the sooner they cease to do it, and get into the right way, the sooner will other evils be done away with. Every low-natured sweater, every discreditable mine-salter, every Hebraic usurer, who draws misbegotten wealth from the souls of his victims, takes the "upper ten" as his model. Like them he begins by having no shame to live upon the labour of others, but with his baser nature and more viciously sharpened wits, he betters their instruction.

It would be unjust, of course, to blame the aristocracy for all the evils of the prevailing economic system; but inasmuch as they were the first to set the example of taking from the labourer his independence and subjecting him to an economic vassalage, they must bear their quota of the disgrace of the existing anarchic condition of the industrial world; and if they are of the higher mintage to which they lay claim, they will be among the first to join the Order of Rectification.

CHAPTER XVI

"He that ploweth ought to plow in hope, and he that thresheth, to thresh in hope of partaking."

Reference has already been made to Professor Marshall's statement to the effect that it is a misnomer to apply the term "lower classes" to a large portion of the artisan population, many of whom, so far as thought and conduct are concerned, lead as noble and refined lives as do the best of the upper classes. This is a great thing to be able to say, but it is even still more striking to reflect that some of the most characteristic social movements of the century have had their origin amongst the workers. It will suffice to instance trade-unionism, building and friendly societies, working men's savings banks, and brotherhood associations, all of which may be classed under the heading of co-operation.

It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of trade-unionism. In it are exhibited some of the best instincts of the race—not only physical but moral. For while the trade-unions are avowedly organisations for fight, they have on the whole ever been martialled by men under the strong restraint and guidance of moral prin-

ciple. How deep has been their effect upon the social and political life of these islands, and indeed of the English-speaking world, it is perhaps too early to judge. But it is hardly an exaggeration to say that the trade unions have worked a revolution in industrial affairs by what we understand as "constitutional" and on the whole essentially peaceful means.

The principle has been as happily educative to the classes concerned, as it has been successful in ameliorating the conditions of labour. For while the trade organisations put them in the position to augment wages and to reduce hours of labour; by their building societies they have been enabled to purchase houses for themselves that otherwise they would not have been able to compass, and by their benefit societies to provide by mutual self-help against the proverbial rainy day. But over and above all this, it fell to them —by a natural sequence, as would seem—to discover and practically work out the principle of co-operation as applied to trade, thereby reducing the price and improving the quality of the necessaries of life, whereof they are such large consumers, and for which, in the ordinary way of trade, they pay so dearly.

Nevertheless, though co-operation in these respects has made such admirable progress in England, it is doubtful whether many of even

the most intelligent among the co-operators have yet fully grasped the enormous power they have to their hands in the thorough comprehensive and effective carrying out of that principle. In its quiet extension and patient development lies an entire social revolution. A more thorough re-casting and re-forming of society is to be effected by its means than by the violent overthrow of a revolution. For the general result of such catastrophes is that the constitution of society remains very much the same, almost the only difference being that the places are shuffled, some who were above going below, while others who happened to be beneath are shaken up to the top. The net result is that simply another batch of officious persons, eager for salaries, and not unfrequently greedy for spoil to boot, attain the helm of power.

There is too much of this even at the best of times. Men who apprehend untold ills to politics should members of Parliament be allowed a small stipend to cover the cost of their attendance in London are blind to the still greater evils incident to a system that makes the highest offices of State prizes to be won for their monetary value.

The time will probably come, though not just yet, when people will as soon think of a stipendiary statesman as of a stipendiary god. And

the true statesman will as readily dream of taking a bribe as of stipulating for a salary. The men who direct the supreme policy of the State should be above all pay and emolument. Let us furnish their table for them, and let them travel freely at the State's expense; but salary—let us leave that for the smaller men, for the fillers of offices. Thus the lesser men will be avoided—the men who contend for the stipend, not for the honour of working for the nation's good. If, after the statesman has done his work—when he has retired from the direction of affairs—he fall into poverty, then pension him and make his declining days days of comfort. But do not dishonour him with the idea that he is being paid for his work. The truly great work cannot be paid for. Thanks be to the Powers, William Shakespeare died still William Shakespeare—a poor man in a small house.

We know what benefits have been derived from co-operative action in those towns and villages where the principle has taken a thorough hold on the community. Let it be extended in every direction—to production, to manufacture, to distribution wholesale—and the effect in course of time must be to render the working classes wholly independent of the mere exploiters of labour.

What is wanted now is that co-operators should

turn their attention to the land, and by a well-arranged system purchase freeholds all over the country as opportunity affords, especially in the vicinity of large towns, and re-sell or let them on easy terms to suitable men. The holdings might vary from one to ten or twenty acres. They should not be too large; the object being to settle as many industrious men in the country as possible. Moreover, where feasible, preference should be given to men who have a trade in their fingers besides that of agriculture or gardening, so that they may have something to turn their hands to, and thus to keep the mill going, when there is little or nothing doing on the land, so especially the case during the winter months.

Indeed, it would be well if working men, as a rule, had more than one trade or craft at their fingers' ends. There is no reason whatever why an intelligent lad should not learn shoe-making or tailoring, as well as brick-laying, or book-binding or wood-carving, as well as gardening. Then, if work were scarce in the one trade, or not possible on account of the weather, as is so often the case in agriculture and the building trades, the workman could turn his hand to his other craft. If he were able to do nothing else, he could, being a shoemaker or tailor, usefully employ his time in his own or his neighbour's

families. There is a world of wealth for workers in these unfilled and other co-operative ways.

But to return to the question of co-operation in the cultivation of small holdings—there would be no difficulty in arranging for the absorption of all the produce of such culture, whether butter, cheese, eggs, milk, fruit, vegetables, or poultry, for which we are now paying the foreigner something like £40,000,000 sterling annually. In this respect, as in many others, they seem to have gone ahead of us in France, where, at the present time there are some five hundred farmers' co-operative associations. These, which owe their institution mainly to the patronage of the French Government, which keeps a jealous eye on the progress of the great national industry, were intended to enable farmers to buy what they need in their business at wholesale prices and of guaranteed quality. But within the last few years, many of these agricultural syndicates, as they are termed, have extended their operations to the exchange of farm products amongst themselves, and to the sale of these products to outsiders.

How different our insular British method! Although co-operation has, on the whole, been the means of effecting great and unquestionable good among the workers, yet we see everywhere, amongst a certain class, nothing but hatred and

prejudice expressed against the principle. One can understand the shopkeeper class disliking co-operation, whose profits it may reduce in towns where it is much in vogue; but why capitalists should be opposed thereto it is more difficult to understand, except on the ground that anything that tends to increase the independence of the worker militates, as they think, against them, inasmuch as it prevents their having labour at their own price whenever and wherever they may like to employ it.

And yet how narrow and short-sighted is such a policy. For co-operation, as Molesworth so ably puts it, by giving every man a property of his own, makes it the interest of all to uphold the sacredness of property. By making every man to a certain extent a capitalist, it compels him to respect capital, and to perceive that if there are some enterprises that can be well and safely conducted by small capitalists combining their resources to make a large capital, there are many others in which it is essential that the capital should be concentrated in the hands of a single individual, able to act on his own responsibility. By making the same man at once capitalist and workman, employer and employed, co-operation enables him to comprehend and make allowances for the difficulties of the employer's position, and in this way tends to palliate, if not

altogether to remove, those unfortunate trade disputes which have at times been attended with such mischievous consequences both to employers and their workmen in the manufacturing districts. Much the same may be said in regard to making labouring men owners of land or tillers of small holdings on their own account.

It is not necessary to go at any length into the question of co-operation. Its general principles are fairly well understood, although the immense possibilities that lie within it are far from being grasped, even by its stoutest advocates. At the root of it co-operation is nothing more nor less than a protest against unfair trading, against the besetting vice of our commercial system, the aim of which is to extort as large a profit as possible for goods sold; and to such perfection has this system been brought that men will go to the length of committing almost any crime in the calendar in order to force up the selling price of their commodities, or to secure the command of the market.

The Standard Oil Trust is an instance in point. This is one of the most extensive monopolies in the United States, and its life-history is, if we may trust the account given of it in Mr Henry D. Lloyd's "Wealth against Commonwealth," one of the blackest records in the annals of latter-day commercialism. There is a school of

political economists who are for ever preaching the doctrine of *laissez faire* in respect to all industrial and commercial enterprise. They would "let alone" the adulterator, the false trade-mark user, the regrator, leaving those "economic harmonies," concerning which Bastiat was so eloquent, to work out their own beatific results. Well, in the United States this doctrine has been allowed full swing, and the Standard Oil Trust is a living exemplification of what it may lead to. According to Mr Lloyd's book, the methods employed by the responsible heads of the corporation to attain their ends did not stop at arson, perjury, conspiracy, bribery, or even murder. The record is an astounding one, and one would be inclined to doubt the facts had not strenuous attempts been made in America to impeach their accuracy, but without avail.

Indeed, the voluminous array of facts and figures, gathered together with the greatest care, and often confirmed by sworn evidence, carry irresistible conviction. From its first humble beginnings to its present vast magnitude and sinister power Mr Lloyd traces its course with ruthless and unerring hand. "We see," says the *Daily Chronicle*, from which this account is chiefly taken, "the monopoly gathering enterprise after enterprise within its octopus embrace. We see it deliberately ruining all competitors

by the most unscrupulous means. We see it corruptly using juries and State legislators. We see it conspiring to defraud a large city. We see it employing secret agencies for illegal purposes in various parts of America. We see it entering into intimate relations with other similar monopolies for the purpose of levying a tribute on the public rather than for legitimately supplying genuine public needs. And all through its history we see how true wealth-production has been sacrificed to the idea of merely gaining power."

The result is enough to stagger one's faith, not in a "reign of righteousness," but in common honesty and humanity. And yet there is really no great cause for surprise. It is only the spectacle of unchecked human nature aiming at and achieving its selfish ends at all costs. The same thing has been done again and again, in different forms, in our own country, and by men of honourable repute. The reason why this particular example shocks one so much is that its operations have been carried on so openly and on so large a scale. Where so many persons were concerned one would expect that some consciences would have been stirred to revolt. Perhaps they were. Anyway, Mr Lloyd's book is a healthy sign, and will do good; for the people whom he addresses are not dead, but living, and at the bottom profoundly religious.

His aim, as he tells us, is to awaken the civic consciousness of the United States, and to rekindle the public spirit which made a nation out of a congeries of human atoms, and which alone can make a State and keep it sound. A further aim he has before him is that of enforcing the idea that while the individual should receive what he is honestly enabled to earn by his industry, the community should also receive for public purposes a share of the total mass of wealth which it helps to create—a doctrine which is bound to have a large future; for therein lies the whole philosophy of co-operation: each individual working at one and the same time both for himself and the community, each end being alike for his own good and that of his neighbour.

Looked at merely as a method of trading, co-operation is easily misunderstood, or at least not grasped in its full significance; but it becomes quite a different thing when regarded as a system whereby men, working together for a common purpose, are the better enabled to arrive at some proximate equality of condition and resource.

It is doubtless true, as Professor Marshall says, that "the world is only just beginning to be ready for the higher work of the co-operative movement, and that its many different forms may therefore be reasonably expected to attain a

larger success in the future than in the past." No one who has closely studied the working classes, and has seen what they have done, can doubt that such will be the case.

In all the above-mentioned movements, which have so signally characterised the social evolution of the century, they commenced in a small way, working to an end which they saw plainly before them; and, as men striving in that practical way generally do, achieved success. Had they began with large schemes, and for far-away results, they would have failed, as so many admirable though Utopian schemes have done in times past, and their efforts would have remained as a warning and a discouragement to others.

But the method of the pioneers of the co-operative, as of the trade-union movement, was the wise one of small means to small and present ends. They went just so far as they could see and no further; but having taken that step, they were prepared, from the fresh standpoint reached, to see a little beyond and make another advance.

Such, up to the present, has been the history of co-operative progress. It has been a true evolutionary movement, and if it has suffered checks and sets back, these have been no more than was to be expected, seeing the complicated conditions and unknown forces wherewith the co-operators had to deal.

Not the least of their difficulties was the uneducated or only partially educated material with and on which they had to work. The labouring classes, as a rule, are suspicious, and do not readily trust their fellows until they have been well tried, hence it speaks eloquently for the moral earnestness with which these movements have been entered into, and thus far carried on, that they have resulted in so large a measure of mutual trust, as well as of cheerful self-sacrifice. For many of the leaders of co-operation have shown such exceptional business capabilities, and so fine a genius for organisation and management, that they might have aspired to far greater pecuniary rewards outside the movement had they been disposed to consider self alone.

But in this lies one of the chief glories of these peculiarly working-class developments—that they owe their primary success to an amount of devotion and even to some extent of self-effacement, that it would be difficult to find so generally exemplified in any other class of society. Well might Gerald Massey declare, as he did in a lecture in St George's Hall many years ago, that these steadfast workers for a common end and a common elevation afford the finest exemplification of practical altruism that he had ever met with.

Not the least remarkable feature connected with co-operation, and the one which offers perhaps the most promise for the future, is the fact that where the principle has taken the deepest root, it has not been confined to the supply or production of merely physical needs, but has been extended so as to embrace moral objects. But this is the necessary correlate of all work the end whereof is mutual benefit in place of mutual "besting." It begins with the desire on the part of those who form the little society to make the most of their united means for the supply of their material necessities. But this end having been attained, it is seen that they can still further help and benefit each other by promoting the ends of education and social enjoyment through the establishment of libraries and the provision of concerts and other entertainments, the members of the society itself supplying the talent.

Nor does effort stop here. For it is found that when all are working for a common object, instead of trying to get as much as possible out of each other, so bright and hopeful a spirit is developed, and so confident a feeling of mutual help being the best of self-help, that education, library, and entertainment funds, to say nothing of other means and aids to the common well-being, are the natural outcome.

In other words, it is found by these people, that by fair and honest trading one with another, they can not only supply themselves with the necessaries and many of the luxuries of life, but that, when other things have been provided for, they have still a margin of profit left which they consider well and justly set aside for the purpose of broadening and beautifying life and making provision for a securer future.

Have we not here a principle which, if applied generally throughout society, would tend to produce something like order out of our present chaotic conditions? Suppose we were to recognise that all large incomes, whether derived from trade, manufacture, commerce, or any other source, should return something to the community for the benefit of those whose health and strength are their capital, and who, when they have honourably expended both in the service of the community, and are no longer able to work, are entitled to a comfortable and respectable maintenance to the end of their days—should we not by so doing go far towards establishing a lasting peace between Labour and Capital?

The capitalist may reply that he cannot in justice be called upon to make such a sacrifice: his responsibility ends with the payment of his workman's wages. But that does not meet the justice of the case; for when the worker is

incapacitated for further labour, either by old age or disease, he has to be maintained by someone, and on whom should the burden fall if not on those who have taken most out of him?

The capitalist gives a dead inert substance (with his intelligence, of course); the worker brings to bear vitality, energy, intelligence, industry, numbers, order, to say nothing of his gradually acquired knowledge and dexterity. These make the dead substance not only valuable, but of cumulative value. Yet the capitalist claims not only the first money invested, but all that, under the workman's industry, vitality, and productive skill and energy it becomes, saying virtually to him, "You are entitled to so much as will keep up your strength and no more."

Is this reasonable? Is it right? The worker's capital, that is, his health, strength, and his natural and acquired gifts are as valuable to him as the employer's capital, and of equal value to the community. The worker, therefore, should live with as full assurance that while he is employing his capital diligently and wisely for the benefit of the community, he is providing a sure dividend for his old age or time of need, as the capitalist that his investments will be protected from fraud.

And whence should the workers' old age divi-

dend come, if not from the unearned increment which forms so large a proportion of all large fortunes? For after fortunes have reached a certain point they increase, as one may say, of their own momentum, and simply and almost solely because the community is a rich and fruitful soil.

It will be for future legislators, considering these facts, to decide what this unearned margin of capital should contribute as its due to the superannuation dividend of the workers. Nothing, in any case, should be done to hamper trade or to check enterprise. But the community has a sacred right and duty to protect itself from the impoverishment and other evils brought about by the excessive accumulation of wealth in a few hands.

Since the above was written the question of old age pensions has arisen and has been shelved because legislators do not know where to find the £20,000,000 that would be required annually to do an act of justice to the workers. Well, if they were to require those who have always been the oppressors of the producer to do the right thing the difficulty would be at once met. Everyone who knows anything about the question knows that, by a bargain made with William of Orange, the landholders of the country, in place of military services rendered to the Crown,

undertook to pay a land tax of 4s. in the pound. But ever since its imposition that tax has been unjustly evaded by those who agreed to pay it.

Now, if half the sum which the very moderate Act of 1692 said should be paid by the landholders for the privilege of retaining their lands after they ceased to render the services for which they were granted, found its way into the Treasury it would furnish the people with old age pensions. In short, it would produce just the £20,000,000 which are estimated to be necessary for that purpose. Nothing is more certain in economics than the fact that the £200,000,000 of net ground values in this kingdom are due, not chiefly to the exertions of the landowners, but to the number and character of the whole population. We have, therefore, in these two hundred millions, a national fund, created by the nation. Why, then, should not a part of this national fund, say 10 per cent., be reserved as a superannuation dividend, payable to the workers for the share they have taken in creating those values? When we get a legislature that is just all round something of the sort will be recognised as fair and just.

CHAPTER XVII

"Moreover, the profit of the earth is for all."

Let no one go away with the idea that this book is written by one who is a blind apologist of the working class, and that in his eyes they have no faults. They undoubtedly have their weaknesses, many and various; and few know them better than he does, having observed them closely, listened to their complaints, and noted their errors and shortcomings ever since, as a youth, he lived in their midst through the Cotton Famine of the early sixties. But while he recognises this, he recognises also that the social superiors of the workers—their "betters," as they call themselves—have likewise their faults, and that they are not fewer in number, nor yet less varied in character; albeit, a good coat and a clean shirt cover a multitude of sins.

The "betters" seem to forget that fact, although for ever finding fault with the workers. But the chief fault of the masses—after those of not always speaking grammatically, and failing at times to wear fashionable and spotlessly clean attire—appears to be their "discontent." They are, say the classes, never satisfied with the

wages they get, though perhaps ever so much more than their fathers received. This, together with their ingratitude in not being everlastingly thankful for an occasional sup or dole thrown to their misery, is set against them as a crime.

But, *Messieurs et Mesdames les Riches*, whatever their other faults, let this at least be set down to them for virtue, that they will not now be satisfied with less than some shadow of justice, that if their wretchedness compels them to accept the wage of slaves, they have yet the manhood, the sense of outraged honour, not to fawn upon and lick the hand of the giver. For if you ask yourselves seriously, your own hearts will answer that there is hope for one who feels his dishonour, or who feels the dishonourable position into which he has been forced. So long as he is conscious of the degradation of his position, so long will he struggle, so long will he give reason for hope. But let a man once cease to recognise his degradation, once become blind and indifferent to what is the inalienable right of all men, the right to live honourably and decently, and in reasonable comfort, before his fellow-men, in other words, let him become oblivious or neglectful of his natural claims to just and righteous treatment on the part of society, and there is very little hope for him.

It is, in short, one of the most hopeful signs of

the time, and of the existing conflict, that the working classes have a keen and healthy sense of justice, and if not driven to extremity, they will be found to be open to reason and to counsels of moderation. But if such counsels be ignored, and the one-fourth of society try to keep the three-fourths in continual subjection by force, then let the smaller fraction take the consequences. It will have no one to blame but itself. It has had warning enough. The signs of the times are patent enough to all who will open their eyes and see. Moreover, is not the outcry of the thing everywhere?

The literature on this question of questions in our time is enormous. It deals with the subject from every point of view; and while there is necessarily much contradiction, and not improbably some exaggeration, yet on the whole the exposition is marked by a vigour of thought, a calmness of temper, and a largeness of grasp, that compares favourably with contemporary utterances in other branches of inquiry. There never has been a time when so much serious thought was given to the question of labour. It is the most significant thing in our day and generation. For while we have a positive chaos of hypothesis and theory, we see the most serious consensus of opinion as to the impossibility of the continuance of the present condition of the

masses, which, says Kidd, "is utterly without the sanction of the moral code."[1]

While we have no end of more or less virulent doctrine, there wells up in the midst of it all the one clear and persistent thought, that it is the right of the workers to a larger share of the results of their industry; that hitherto, partly by economic robbery, partly by the juggling of finance, very largely by the injustice of privilege, they have been kept out of their rightful heritage; that now it is time for the worker to claim and enter upon his birthright.

There are doctrinaires who see no other way of remedying the evil except by the forcible expropriation of those who hold possession of the wealth and the wealth-producing apparatus of the world. But that means war, and in warfare the capitalist can always outdo and defeat the worker, at least until he is better organised. For it has to be borne in mind that at present the capitalist is the State, and will be until the democracy learn wisdom, and allow themselves to be represented by none but those of their own class.

Besides, the principle of war is the principle of destruction, and to destroy merely is to leave the heart of the matter as it was before. To effect the thorough change which you contemplate, and

[1] "Social Evolution."

which alone can permanently better your condition, O bread-winning multitudes! you need to alter the inner moulding and shaping principle, not externals merely. If the formative idea remain untouched the externals will grow again exactly as before. That is why, as a rule, revolutions have effected so little. They did not go deep enough; they did not change men's hearts; to use an old phrase, or, in other words, they did not give to men fresh ideals.

What is wanted, therefore, for the new reformation or revolution is that you reform your own lives first; instil into your own hearts and those of your children the living vital principle of a new life, a new society, and the revolution you wish for will accomplish itself as if by magic. There is nothing in the history of the world like the revolution that was brought about silently and almost imperceptibly by the gradual infiltration of an idea accepted and taught by poor and lowly men like yourselves. Gradually it overthrew the mighty empire of Rome, and, indeed, almost conquered the world. The weapons of a similar victory are in your hands.

The thought which thus conquered was an ideal, and had that ideal been kept pure and uncorrupt, the conquest which it effected would have been permanent and possibly eternal. But it became polluted, and was turned from its course by

the mingling with it of base and barbarous systems, but especially by the pomp and glitter of wealth and power. Thus it became surcharged with mockeries, which all the efforts of men clearly seeing, and truly esteeming, the superior ideal, have not been able to put right.

That ideal was one by which, with profound insight, the Master saw that only by losing himself can a man find himself—only by throwing himself on the other than self—only by seeking to do right to and for others—can he be sure of getting right done to himself. The whole secret lies in doing the exact right thing as far as possible; and no man who is for ever thinking of himself can do that. But let him forget himself in his desire to see right and justice done to others, and he straightway begins to build himself up—to attain the attitude and the altitude of the true man.

Therein lies the aim for all men. Yet how little we seem to realise that truth. We may sentimentalise about Christianity and its promises, we may pretend to believe it all; but, in truth, we see hardly any of that high resolve to live in this world in the light of the great ideal we ostensibly idolise and worship—we see little of that heroic devotion that is so much needed to counteract the low aims, the shameless intrigues and sordid ambitions, the hard gross sensuality

of thought and feeling that so generally characterise our life to-day.

Can one help at times being tempted to look upon the whole concatenation of churches, chapels, bishops, apostolic successions, prayer mumblings, man-millinery, and spiritual gallimaufry generally, as a huge and painful satire? It was the thought of obedience unto death to a great idea, of unswerving devotion to an accepted truth, of absolute renunciation of mere personal worldly advantages, which so moved the Christian church in its early heroic days. But where is all this Christian heroism now? Have we got beyond the need of it? Was it ever indeed more needed than now amid the welter of conflicting egotisms and unblushing selfishness in this hard, mechanical age?

Can we wonder that men are tempted to revile the whole thing as we see it masquerade before us to-day? Can we wonder that the splendid, yea, the dazzling, ideal, presented to us by the life and thought of the Man of Nazareth, lost sight of in the depraved and emasculated imitation of modern Christendom—that the story of that life and that promise is looked upon as a sweet but delusive song made to lull and assuage, not to redeem, our human misery and despair?

As to any reality in it—shame on us, we are not worthy of it! Such a future as is held up before us! Such an eternity! And we, pre-

tending the while to believe it, barter the lot for a life of tick-tack duration and the petty pleasures it affords—enjoyed for the most part at the expense of others. Ah! poor mortal creatures! One fears, regarding these things seriously, that it is after all but a miserable threepenny-bit sort of world, and that there goes little more than a farthing's worth of spirit to the furnishing forth of a whole generation. It is rare indeed to meet with a man worth as much as that: else should we not find human beings setting such store upon clothes, meat and drink, gold and the like trifles, to the neglect of justice, good feeling, and something of compassion for the misery of others, our fellow-wayfarers. One wonders even that the Lord Christ deemed it worth his while to try to save such a people, who see their heroes in modern-day bishops, swaggering sworders, and princes that change their clothes a dozen times a day; and women, the idols of their adoration, for the most part callow-brained creatures who tighten their bodies till they are like to wasps, and while they encumber one end of their persons with a superfluity of clothing, leave the other extremity needlessly and often shamelessly exposed; and this though those to whose labour they are chiefly indebted for all they have must frequently go without sufficient to eat or to wear.

They are not to be envied, these *pauvres riches*. Wealth is not a synonym for happiness, and it more frequently corrupts than ennobles. It is only necessary to watch that faithful mirror of the time, the press, to see what a canker of looseness, frivolity, and worse, is eating away the heart of grace of our idle classes. Women sending photographs of themselves in night attire to their male friends, frolics at country houses that are fitter for the brothel, wantonness, rampant and unashamed. Such is the Nemesis that pays for the enforced sin and shame at the other end of the social scale. "Neither riches nor poverty," saith the psalmist, and he might have added, "Neither idleness nor crushing toil, but enough labour to give joy, enough leisure to fit for the daily task." That is the condition to promote happiness.

The day has come for saying these things —for saying that those who think society can continue to exist as it has done heretofore, are living in a fool's paradise. One would lose all hope for the world and for man if one thought things could still go on indefinitely as they have done heretofore. No, the world cannot be ruled for ever by the doctrine of devils; and the justice of the market price—a price that may mean semi-starvation to the worker, or worse—is nothing less. If it meant instant

and unlingering starvation it would be merciful and blessed. But when it is a starvation that gradually saps away all vital resistance and resolution, and death only comes after utter degradation — then it is a market price that is wholly damnable and accursed, and if there is nothing else for it, it is best to clear out through "the open door" and appeal to the Life-giver.

How wisely we are taught to talk about the sacredness of contract, about supply and demand, and about the laws of a political economy that dares not go to first principles: to the principle that, if there is any natural right at all, every man and woman coming into the world has a just claim upon the earth's productiveness, in so far as it is natural productiveness. For, if we do not grant that, but hold that it is just and right for a comparative few to own the land of the globe and to arrogate to themselves the whole of its produce, then we land ourselves in a very serious dilemma, as Herbert Spencer has pointed out. For if, as he shows, one portion of the earth's surface may justly become the possession of an individual, and may be held by him for his sole use and benefit, as a thing to which he has an exclusive right, then other portions of the earth's surface may be so held; and eventually the whole of the

earth's surface may be so held, and our planet may thus lapse altogether into private hands. Observe now the dilemma to which this leads. Supposing the entire habitable globe to be so enclosed, it follows that if the landowners have a valid right to its surface, all who are not landowners have no right at all to its surface. Hence such can exist on the earth by sufferance only. They are all trespassers. Save by permission of the lords of the soil, they can have no room for the soles of their feet. Nay, should the others think fit to deny them a resting-place, these landless men might equitably be expelled from the earth altogether. Which is absurd.

But while one may hold that the land is for all, and that justice and equity demand that, in a society confessedly no longer ruled by robbers and assassins, every man and woman coming into the world should have a fair chance and some sort of an equal welcome, especially at the hands of those who claim to be heirs to a great gospel—it does not follow that one is of the class of those vain dreamers who imagine that society can be shaped to a pattern of dead flat uniformity and mediocrity, where no one will be poor, none rich, but all living stolidly humdrum lives, all equally comfortable and equally and unutterably dismal.

Unfortunately, there will always be poverty enough and misery enough in the world. Equality of condition is an idle dream. But it is no idle dream that, so far as human will and human law can help, society shall be so framed as not to be wilfully unjust to any. It is no idle dream to think that what men have done, men may still do. And men have seen, and have acted on the principle, that it is nobler and manlier to live a life of simplicity and labour than it is to exist in idleness upon the only half-requited toil of others.

It is not an idle dream to believe that this nobler type will grow more and more, and that in the end it will prevail over that other which has held the field so long—though it must be said, modifying to some extent, and gradually—in which the highest aim is to get the advantage of another, to take that which he has, to rob, to plunder. The history of most of the world's wars is this; and though it is not so easy to go forth with the sword as it was, many of the financial and other schemes for acquiring money, nominally lawful, are as predacious as the wars, although more cowardly and contemptible. We have of late years seen not a few of such schemes come to grief, and their sponsors to the convict cell; but others as barefaced and nefarious, both here and amongst our transatlantic kinsfolk, still man-

age to live upon the public trust, and escape the scythe. This could not be if Mammon were not enthroned so high, and had not his minions in the seats where godliness and justice alone should sit.

CHAPTER XVIII

"Be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man."

It may occur to some who read these pages to ask: But supposing it were well that all this restoration and reformation should be brought about, how is it to be effected? The question is as pertinent as—to many—it will be perplexing and perturbing. But to those who have carefully noted the trend of thought in the foregoing pages the answer will probably be not very far to seek. The betterment of the world lies in a very simple thing—in the cultivation, namely, of a larger humanity; or, in other words, in the development of real men.

The evils from which society suffers—the injustice, the coarseness, the brutality—have arisen from the survival of savage ideals, which the struggling culture of centuries, the enlightening march of science, and the example of supernal heroism set by the Man of Judea, have been powerless to eradicate. Substitute a new ideal, the ideal of the true, the intrinsic man, with its correlate, the true woman, and the change that would take place in society within a measurable

period would be nothing less than miraculous. It would be like the descent of a new avatar.

Nothing, in short, is needed but the advent of the real man to transform in a very few years the entire form and constitution of society. The barbarous treatment of man by man, the harshness, the cruelty which we behold on every side, would gradually disappear, and we should have an approach to what we understand when we speak of a common or universal brotherhood, the proclamation of which, at the outset, was, according to Mr Lecky, the mission of Christianity.

It is entirely a question of ideals. At one time the ideal man was a butcher—a man with a huge club who beat out the brains of all who did not do his will. This ideal prevailed with but little variation or mutation for ages. When this beast-man was not armed with a spiked bludgeon, it was with a sword or other murderous cutlery; and he was accounted a brave man and a warrior in proportion as he dare go out to meet and cut down men more poorly armed than himself, if not altogether defenceless. These specially armed and armoured men—for in course of time they began to clothe themselves in mail—became a caste, and they made it unlawful for others to be as well armed, or as well educated in arms, as themselves, lest they should not be able at all times to slay — if they wished —

those whom they had made subject to their will.

For it became a part of this ideal of manhood to hold vast territories and to have them cultivated by serfs and bondsmen, who were entirely at their mercy. Even hundreds of years after the advent of Christ, from whom these men were supposed to accept a new ideal, the old cowardly ideal continued to prevail, and the semi-man was as ready as ever to go about with the instruments of murder and rapine suspended from his shoulder and bristling about his waist, to take that which was not his, slay those who opposed his will, and to make himself rich at the expense of the poor and weak. Oh, but he was a brave creature, this knife-carrier!

The strangest thing of all was that this brute man, after one of his orgies of blood and plunder —after one of these bouts of blood-guiltiness and lust, the infernal infamy of which no modern historian dare sully his pages withal — would enter the temples raised in the name of the gentle Galilean, and through him return thanks to the one who calls the stars by their names for the success of his butchery and his greed.

Nor have we quite got rid of this sort of thing yet. We still hang banners steeped in human gore in our State churches; we still regard the killing profession as the most heroic—though,

God wot, it were a dismal world and a poor outlook for humanity did not our daily life present us with heroisms a hundred times more heroic than this! But in the course of time the ideal has changed a little. Now the ideal man—the one popularly worshipped—is not he who is the best killer, the one who has slain and subjugated most, though the State still loves to honour and enrich him the most, but the man who has accumulated the most money. It does not matter much how he came by it—possession is enough. Let it but be known that he is a millionaire, and all the world is at his feet. Honours, titles, "greatness," everything is at his beck and call—everything except true manhood.

Guid faith he canna fa that!

Wealth, in short, is the ideal—Mammon the idol. It is a terrible thing to have to say; but it is literally true. After well-nigh nineteen hundred years of Christianity we have not yet got out of that semi-human, or rather semi-simian, state. We are, in short, but half-men, and when one approaching the full stature of manhood appears we are just as likely as not to persecute him, or to leave him severely alone as a madman or a fool—until he be dead. Then we give him the adoration of words, and perhaps statues.

So long as we remain in this condition of half-

man it is needless to say that society will continue much in the same state as heretofore. We may reform politically as much as we like without touching the rampant evil at the bottom of the social scale. New forms of baseness will but take the place of the old ; the sweater will stand in lieu of the slave-driver, the usurer will take the place of the more valiant robber, the trickster with cards and dice will be exchanged for the stock exchange gambler and company promoter, the charterer of the coffin-ship for the pirate and slave-catcher.

Men who live by such methods, it is needless to say, are not by any means men of an ideal type ; indeed, as touching such a type, it is doubtful even if they can be so much as half-men. At best they can but be admitted to be men arrested in a low stage of development, whom it will still take long ages to bring up to the true altitude and dignity of man—long ages of toil along the upward road ; for not all the sacrifices of all the centuries can vicariously take away their degradation.

What the real man will be it is not easy to say off-hand. It is, however, far from difficult to predict what he will not be. No one can doubt that he will not be unjust, a swearer of false things, a gluttonous liver, a plotter after other men's money, a pretender to spiritual gifts, a

political trickster, a brewer of lunatic broth, a worshipper of dead men's dust, a wearer of clothes merely. Nor, as regards the real woman, will she be a mere hat-carrier. For it is the bane of the weaker vessel, that, having a dim sort of idea that the glory of the human has something to do with the head, she will so often, in lieu of anything substantial within, cover, what worthy old Fuller designates the cock-loft, with the most marvellous structures of feathers, futilities, and show that it is possible to imagine; and be content to wobble along presenting that as the best she can offer before high heaven.

One may even go so far as to affirm that the man of the new ideal—and his worthy coadjutor woman, also—will be simple in his habits, affecting plain clothes and an unaffected speech; that he will be courteous to those beneath him or in any way dependent upon him; that he will not pride himself on his charity, but be nicely just; that he will regard idleness and high living as the twin vices that take all moral grit out of a man; that in all his ways and dealings, especially with those whose birthright is toil, he will be truly gentle, gentle in the very inwardness of the word; and that he would deem it a disgrace to live on the toil of others without giving a full and adequate return by some honest and devoted labour of his own.

He is probably the happiest man in the face of the hereafter, where the inequalities of this life will be rectified, who shall be able to say, "I have lived on the sweat of no man's face but my own. No man can shame me before the ultimate tribunal by saying that I lived on his or her labour. No child will be able to arise and accuse me of having put it on the mill of toil that I might be rich and idle, or that my sons might be thriftless and sin. No one can say I shirked my quantum of the world's work, or that I did it carelessly or with indifferent hand."

There are those who will not be able to say that. There are men—human creatures, that is—who live and grow fat on the slavery of others; and if they cannot to-day become rich on the labour of children, as before-time they did, they can and do still make their unholy percentages out of the under-paid labour of girls and the starvation of women.

The one who can do that is very far from being a real man. The one who in any way lives upon the labour of another without giving him a just return, not only does that man a wrong, but he commits an even graver crime against himself also. For only by worthy work can a man—or woman—rise to that moral elevation which is the sole and inevitable stamp of true manhood—of true womanhood.

We are apt to lose sight of that fact—a fact as eternal as the stars, as immutable as the moral law. A man does a mean or an unjust thing against his neighbour; he profits by it, and plumes himself upon its successful accomplishment and issue. He does not know, or forgets, poor man, that the very instant he committed that act he set at work the machinery which in the end must avenge his sin or his crime. The mean act hurts the victim, but it hurts the doer more. Though the unjust deed causes pain to the sufferer, he will nevertheless recover from its effects quicker and more surely than the perpetrator.

For the time being, when an unjust thing is done, it seems simple enough. But in truth it is very terrible. For, with every degrading act committed, something of the divine in a man is taken away, and he sinks lower in the scale of manhood; and if he is to rise and recover lost ground again, it must be through suffering and pain—sometimes through incredible suffering and pain. For there is no washing such stains away except by painful upward growth.

Sometimes men do wrong against others without knowing it, simply through the observance of a convention of society. But even they, in obedience to the divine law, must suffer—not to the same extent, perhaps, as those who willingly and

knowingly do wrong, but still the penalty must be paid. The penalty is terrible to them—the more terrible because they live highly and nobly according to their lights. But there is no growth except through work and struggle ; and for those lulled in the lap of luxury and sloth, where is the struggle, where is the goal achieved? It is a drift through life with little effort and no stretch. Satisfied with false ideas, content to appear and not to be, what are they—what can they be—but half-men at best?

After all, it may be for the toiling multitude to set the example of living up to a nobler ideal—of realising in truth the true religion. They are not hampered like the others ; they have less to throw off, to unlearn. The Christian exemplar perceived the difficulty, the almost impossibility of a rich man or woman being truly religious. The weight of the gold bears down the spirit in them, hardens the heart, and chokes up well-nigh all the well-springs of pity and humanity. True sympathy with the world's sorrows, the feeling of brotherhood, the compassion that stimulates justice—these things are not in them.

Yes, it may be for you, O toiling multitudes! to do this pioneer work. You can suffer from no such canker of the heart as that which too often deadens and degrades the rich. Your lives are spent in poverty, often enough on the verge

of want, amid scenes of sorrow and wretchedness from year end to year end. Daily you are called upon to have your hearts moved by pity and compassion, and only those who have lived amongst you know how ready you are to give sympathy, and to render substantial help too, according to your means. A noble man who fought for you and amongst you all his life, once exclaimed: "Were it not for the poor the poorer would die!" And true it is. Out of your little you give far more in proportion than the rich; nor does your right hand effusively shake your left over the fact.

It is for you, I say, to realise the nobler ideal—yes, even to show the gold-sodden the way to a truer religion. Their ideal is to possess a fine house, and to have many servants to whom they are able to say, "Do this, do that"; to run after the fox on fleet horses, or to go *en masse* after a tame deer, and to see it die, torn by dogs, or reserved for future torture; to shoot and kill—time, if nothing else; to affect a grand style by outward show; to pretend to a superiority that in reality they do not possess—or rarely. But to live greatly and simply, to be truly gentle—ah, that is too often beyond them!

The real man—the man of the new ideal—will be very different to that. He will be neither afraid nor ashamed of work. He will rather have

pride in being able to handle spade, or scythe, or the shafts of the plough, and to do his day's work with the lowliest. It will be his delight to take his place by the side of the common man, and impart to him something of the knowledge and craft he has, while he in turn learns what he can from the other, nature's intimate. If his years of study, if his contact with the world, have taught him anything that can make life nobler and better, will not he, the real man, be earnest to communicate it, and to do his share towards lifting and improving the world?

The turning-point may not be just yet, but it will come. The truly lofty souls will begin by asking themselves: "Is there nothing in all these lives worthy of our cultivation—no desire like ours, no possibility—that we should stand aloof, regarding them simply as dull, cloddish instruments for our use, to make life useful and pleasant to us, and to be cast aside and forgotten when that end is served? Are they not the same as we, compact of the like blood and spirit, with the like yearnings, the like hopes, the like fears? Is not their incoming the same, and their outgoing too — by 'the house appointed for all living'? And yet, forsooth, every political effort, every concession granted, is shackled with the open or implied intention to keep them down as mere instruments."

We are, in truth, almost as much slave drivers in intention as ever. Some of us cannot fashion a system of education but there runs through it —or we would have run through it—the implication that some are born to serve, and we must be careful not to give emancipation. Such is the ruling of Providence, we say. And how eager we are to help the hand of Providence when our own selfish ends are in the balance!

Half-men! Half-men! Can you not see your degradation? Are you not able to rise a step higher? Is it not in you to climb to a loftier altitude, and so look at things in a light free from the huge and distracting personal equation? Did it never occur to you — you especially of the religion—did it never occur to you that it was not enough to keep these people simple and ignorant, living very much as the brute beasts, cultivating in them a faith which is in truth but a blind credulity, with nothing in it of the lifting aim, the upward struggle, the victory won, partial perhaps, but still victory? If there be something noble in the career of those who, in an imperfect world, and amid errors and tumults innumerable, range themselves with this or that battalion of intellectual or moral contestants, or with this or that band of spiritual pioneers, and suffer the hardships and trials incident to the fight, for the joy of the contest, and what strength and glory

may come of it, why should those whom you leave in ignorance be debarred the life and expansion of the conflict? Is it for fear lest there should be none to plough your tilth and groom your beasts, none to black your boots and scour your floors? Shame on you! A thousand indelible shames on your selfishness and your sloth! Enter the field and join the battle with them. The renunciation of your selfishness is the struggle for you. It would do you good, if you are men, to go into your barns and gardens, if you be true women, to descend into your kitchens and laundries, and do some work—in the sweat of your face.

Would you not thereby be obeying the command of "the Lord your God"? Why should you leave to your poorer brethren the blessing that comes of an ordinance fulfilled? Most assuredly you are doing so; and in this, and so far, your "inferiors" come nearer the true altitude than you. But perchance you are only pretenders, but "half-believers of our casual creed," and give to it lip-service only.

CHAPTER XIX

"Be of good cheer and let us play the man."

The great hope of the fresh renaissance, of the renewed youth of the world, lies in the young—in the young of both sexes, but especially in woman. We want a new man, but almost still more we want a new womb-man, because upon her depends so much in the new birth of mankind that is needed. And the new woman must be one who will not aim at being a man, but will aspire to give to the world real men. Is it too much to hope that we may one day see such a woman—one who will think, not one, as now, that accepts all the ideas she has from some petty homunculus, accepts her ideas from the fashion plates, and believes with the decadent novel that the whole of her duty consists in learning to simper and to look as beautiful as she can in a new dress. Her real duty is far other than that. If she cannot look beautiful in the glow of her moral and spiritual being, then the men had best pass her by and leave her to the companionship of her textile adorations. She is not the one to bear real men and real women.

The mother of real men is of a very different

complexion to that. Here and there may be found a few even now, but they will have to grow from more to more ere the great time come.

Ay, mother of the man that is to be, mother of him who will bring the great awakening, the revindication and assertion, yours it is to whisper to him ere he be born—to whisper to your girl-child, too, the while she still nestles there close to your heart—heart of your heart, soul of your soul—to whisper to them your yearning, your aspiration. In the long and dreamful day, in the silent, prayerful night, when He with whom you are co-creator seems so near, whisper the budding soul how poor men suffer, how poor labouring women suffer and repine, that others may be idle and rich and thoughtless—how helpless little ones go cold and hungry that others may have too much, how their scant bread is sopped with tears and their pillows with the thought of the hopeless dawn. Tell them of the slavery, of the misery, of the degradation, of the religion that is a mockery. Tell them these things, little mother, and put it to them, burn it into the very pith and marrow of their souls, that when they grow up to be men and women, and the world is before them, that they shall be fiery and strong, and refuse to submit to such slavish toil, such misery and degradation, but choose rather to hunger and thirst to the end than so to live—yea, by prefer-

ence, accept the great and unyielding renunciation, the renunciation of life itself.

Tell the budding souls, O mothers! tell them the noble yet pitiful story of the Caribs, the people whom the despicable Spaniards found in the beautiful islands which we now call the West Indies, whom they found innocent and free, and whom, because they were unused to war and to injustice, and could not contend against the fire-guns and great knives of the murderers of Spain, they thought to make slaves of, and to put to ignominious toil in the mines. These poor Caribs, however, preferring death to such degradation and slavery, took their own lives and the lives of their children, and went out fearless into the great beyond where God still lives and is for ever pitiful, and for ever at the scales weighing the souls of men, what they are and what they do.

The story is a very terrible one, but a very glorious one—one of the most glorious in all history.

Whisper this great example, little mothers, to the men and women that are to be, and put it on them as a sacred duty to be so true to the ideal of the true man and the true woman that they will prefer starvation to degradation—death to a life less than one of full, free, and enlightened manhood and womanhood.

Do this, O mothers, when the fashioning and creating God is so near to you, so immanent and pervading within and about you, and you will do more towards settling this question of unpaid and underpaid labour, of degraded and despised manhood, and of real as against half men, than all the statutes of all the Parliaments. Tell them it is better to go out resolutely into the great God-litten space of the beyond than to accept slave labour, a serf-like condition. Tell them it is better to be heroes than helots, and you, O mothers of the nations! can make heroes and heroines of your sons and daughters if you only will, and it is the heroes and the heroines who make laws and shape destinies more than the Acts of Congresses and Parliaments and the decrees of Courts and Synods.

To your sacred task, then, mothers, reformers, law-givers! Set such a seal on the heart of every man-child and every woman-child that comes into the world that they shall work for its freeing, for its ennoblement; and that they shall strive to that end not by political means only, but with religious earnestness, with religious zeal, and with that renunciation which is still a weapon when all others have been taken away; "for there is no man that has power over the spirit to retain the spirit."

In truth, the only hope for England, as for the

world, lies in the attainment of a true religion, one adapted to the character and needs of the people and the age, a heart-shaping and a man-forming religion, not one of the lip and the knee alone. In this respect religion is the first and last word. The essence of it undoubtedly lies in Christianity, but in a Christianity ransomed from the fetters with which it is now bound—pagan superstitions, the fancies of Rabbinical Judaism, Greek sophistries, and the pomps and ceremonies of imperial Rome.

With such a resurrection of religion as would take hold of and spiritualise national energy and renew national life, we might also look forward to a genuine uprising, a veritable palingenesia, which should make earth young again, and fill the heart of every man and woman amongst us with the quickening sense of an ever-widening and uplifting emancipation and brotherhood.

This cannot be brought about by mere changes of governmental machinery—by the mere decanting of the old effete spirit into newly-shaped bottles, prettily labelled perchance, but with ever the same damned and damning contents. A new character, a renovated soul, is what is needed, and that new character and reinvigorated spirit must be founded upon a new belief in the real nature of man—on that true nature of man and of the human soul which the political economists, and

the spiritual economists likewise, have too often left out of their reckoning.

In short, for a great and successful reawakening, for a true and hopeful re-shaping, we need to proceed on a thorough revision of our conception of what a man potentially is, and what his position here. This revisional work has already begun, and is going on apace. The pioneers and investigators are at work in every land; the prophets and seers are lifting up their voices wherever men are congregated together, in workshops and factories, in lowly bothies on far hill-sides, deep down in darksome mines, in camps and clearings, in vessels that plough the deep—everywhere. On every side efforts are being made to quicken the dull latent powers of the average man, to fit and fashion him for the coming democracy, in which, while none will be neglected and none despised, no class of people will be relieved "of the responsibility of planning and struggling for its own existence and well-being."

Herein lies alike the mission and the discipline of the workers. For it is only those whose brains have been drilled and inured to work that are capable of conceiving and putting forth vigorous effort for a renovated and purified social state. To them belong the inspiration—to them the unyielding strenuousness of the fight. In this task they need little if any help from the upper

circles as a class. They, barbarians still, have been too long worshippers of the fetish of birth and title to be converted to any true religion, or real unbiassed contemplation of life, so long as they remain a class apart.

Yes, O workers! it is for you to "stir up the billows of war," to fight for the new ideals, to carry the quivering torch on and on, ever upward along the toilsome slope, till the new city of rest be won. But let no dreams of a possible paradise of idleness deceive you! Look forward to no lotus-eating on ever peaceful shores, for that were death, but simply to a heaven of nobler work with juster requital. And there is no question but that goal is obtainable if you will, and will resolutely, all as one.

Nor will you be alone in the great enterprise if you go to work with justice in your hearts and enlightenment in your minds. Every day there is a growing companionship of noble minds—of men who accept the life that is given, the career that is opened to them, and without whimper or affright, nor yet over-bold, willingly fight it out with courage to the end; taking unjust dues from no man, tormenting no man to his hurt, scorning with all that is deepest in the scorn of lofty minds to take tribute of the labour of women and children, and whether it be poverty or riches, gladness or sorrow, that rewards

their toil, thanking the immortal Umpire of the race for the strength it brought out and the joys it gave—thanking him even that they were deemed men enough to need no unequal bolstering, no prop of wealth, no crutch of title, but bare as their mothers gave them to the world, started fair from the base, asking only to be directed where was the goal, what the highest aim, chanting, perhaps, in the spirit, if not in the words of the Spartan poet of to-day :—

> "Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the pit from pole to pole,
> I thank whatever gods there be
> For my unconquerable soul."

Ay, thanks to the Inspirer, to the darkling Supporter and Sustainer, many such there be! And the little companionship will grow. For many a great-soul'd man, many a great-hearted woman, too, who did not know what ailed them with their wealth and their idleness, will debarrass themselves of this plethora, and join the immortal band. In all lands and amongst all peoples, these, but most of all, I believe, amongst the race that went through its century-long fusion and amalgam in these isles. There is a glorious future for that race, through its various septs and ramifications. But to England, and to her sister beyond the deep, belongs as yet the lead.

To the one people has been given but few

ideas, to the other many, though crude; but both possess the demon of work, and they possess also, as I think, the deepest sense of duty of any people. In spite of a commercialism the most banal and deadening, the altruism of both peoples is of the nature of a passion. This may be seen by noting how much they are devoted to philanthropy. What agencies and associations there are throughout both lands for helping others and ministering to the afflicted, for saving souls, though not for making them start safe. The lamentable thing is that so much of this pious energy is wasted by being frittered away in mere idle and often useless charity.

Philanthropy is good, but it is best when it is helping along the cause of justice, the cause of human solidarity and brotherhood. The public conscience has become steeped to the core in what we must consider the bastard virtue of charity, to an almost utter obliviousness of justice. Men and women, but especially women who, forgetting for a space that little godless cult of ancestry, devote their time and much of their means to relieving distress and seeking out fresh fields of benevolence—let one but hint to them that the constitution of society is bad, based on indefensible selfishness and greed, on a system that breeds and foredooms souls for hell, if anything does, and they will hold up their hands in

pious horror. And yet what instruments for good might not these same noble sisters be if, instead of setting up charity as their ideal, they were to give their devotion to the cultivation and accomplishment of justice—Justice, that fairest and noblest passion of them all—the calm, prevailing passion of the divine intent!

It is a thing to be remarked in every history and wherever the deeds of men are under consideration, how smoothly things go when the man who has the destinies of others in his keeping acts with a tolerable regard to justice and right. What an oasis is the chapter which records such an episode amid the arid deserts of human tyranny and wrong! And how rarely they occur! Under such treatment men leap to gladness, and ere long they begin to lose half the savageism which is ever lying dormant in humanity, and ready on the least provocation to assert itself.

Had St Paul's trinity of virtues been faith, hope, and *justice*, affirming the greatest of these to be justice, he would have come nearer the truth than he did with his faith, hope, and "charity." That beggarly virtue has misled the world, has warped Christianity from its true course. Men have been led by it to think that in giving their acquiescence and sanction to a society founded on an unjust

basis they were on solid ground and their Christianity saved. But, poor shortsighted men, they were miserably mistaken. Christianity has failed of its right ideal so long as through or by its effort some approach to equal justice has not been accomplished.

A feeling and aspiration for this divine quality we find here and there in individuals; but in the bulk of the people, especially in those who assume themselves to be cultured and aspire to govern, it is only just creeping into their united counsels, ineffectually for the most part, and with a sort of half-hearted conviction. Hence we English are still very far from being a truly great people. We may be called a big, burly, and to some extent at least, a very brutal nation, loving the clatter and parade of war, with not a few fine streaks of lordly character and potential greatness; but as to real greatness—there is yet to be infused into the inchoate mass of warring attributes that lofty detachment of spirit and ethereal refinement of nature which alone mark the truly great.

We have been called by our continental neighbours perfidious, and perfidious we certainly have been. The classes which did the governing in times past were perfidious to the back bone. They were capable of throwing about them, when the need arose, a Roman toga of virtuous

similitude; but beneath its deceitful folds was hidden a multitude of sins and shames. One would not like to say that they were worse than their accusing neighbours; but they were no better. Possibly it might not be just to affirm that they are the same now; to some extent at least the mantle has gone from them to the financial bosses—those contemptible creatures who have swum in the pactolean stream of a base commercialism until everything, honour, honesty, humanity, patriotism, religion itself, have been transmuted into a mere yellow sediment of gilded corruption and pollution. And in this respect it is not we alone who suffer the abasement.

If one had not intense faith in the destiny of the imperial race that has carried the one tongue round the globe and graven it with a deeper than Roman indelibleness upon every continent and the islands of all the seas, one would lose hope in the future of the world. But it cannot be that the people that has established liberty as a birthright and founded nations the very breath and pulse of whose being are derived from the inherent indomitableness of its spirit—it cannot be that that people shall ultimately fail of the yet higher and nobler achievement that lies before it. The universal thought looks to it for an advance beyond anything that has

been won by its conquering sword or the still more potent arm of its industrial energy—an advance to be gained by a simple faith in that higher manhood which, whenever reached, takes humanity captive and hales it forward and upward, as though by the irresistible strains of an ethereal music.

One must indeed at times fear for the laggard step of the old home, with its enthralling traditions and the seductive make-believe of a partial culture; but the South and the West are calling, and the East steadily appealing; and what with the invitation on the one hand and the incitement and rivalry on the other, she must break ground at last and, throwing her base egotisms to the wind, frankly accept the ideals she has but peddled with and paltered with in the past, and follow, high of soul, whithersoever her genius may lead.

It is a high and glorious destiny—one more glorious, more inspiring, never loomed in ecstatic vision before the eyes of mortal men; and, knit together as they are by oneness of speech and a common aim, ten thousand shames will cling to and blacken the memory of the people derived from Anglo-Saxon stock if they allow that proud heritage to elude their grasp. Only the gleam of gold and the frenzy of money-sweating can debar them from that crown and

goal of eventual achievement; and whoso is sound of faith must still believe and work with unswerving conviction in the belief that there is still moral health and hardihood enough at the core of that people to cleanse the disease that is eating away its heart, and so set it once more marching to the pulse-beat of the realms, far away yet near, whose unheard and invisible harmonies thrill along the highways of space, appealing for admission into the souls of men, eager to awaken in them those chords of feeling and of thought that are as the force-engendering drum-taps of the Eternal and Omniscient Mind.

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